Entertainment
Willie Revillame not invited to wedding of ex-wife, Princess Punzalan

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Ji-Abu linkup worries experts on antiterror

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Reworking the basic blue jeans into a stylized, unique pair

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DOJ files kidnap charges against Dennis Roldan

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, March 4, 2005 ▲ 48 pages | vol. 20 | no. 86

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IDs for newborn babies, too

Scrap Senate, House urges

Miriam: Let's just all commit suicide

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michael Lim Ubac

ENRAGED by the Senate approval of the P907.56-billion budget for this year that cut the pork barrel of legislators by 60 percent, several members of the House of Representatives called for the abolition of the upper chamber.

Rep. Jose Solis (Kampi, Sorsogon) said the Senate was an "appendix of Congress" that should be promptly severed.

Claiming that many senators had become more concerned with winning "favorable points," House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the country could be "in a better state if it has a single-yet-limited, with each member representing a clearly defined constituency."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said senators should expect members of the House to retaliate.

She suggested that all senators and congressmen just commit mass suicide as the "best public service to the people."

At the word war escalated, Senate President Franklin Drilon called for a "ceasefire" in the budget row with the House, saying the quarrel could reach to the further deterioration of relations between the two chambers.

"I will go out of my way to try to patch things up, despite the ridiculous insults because really there should be no reason to stop finger-pointing," Drilon said. "I'm calling for a ceasefire, we should tone down the rhetoric."

He said he would visit top Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. as soon as the House leader returned from Belgium.

"Once Joe comes back, I will sit down with him to find ways to avoid any further deterioration of relations because if this is not patched up, it can affect the legislative program of the President," Drilon said.

Drilon said he received a call from Senate Speaker Aquilino Pimentel Jr., expressing concern over the "deteriorating relations"

MAIN STORY

TO MARKET, TO MARKET
President Arroyo and Sen. Mar Roxas exchange jokes and pleasantries with the media on Thursday during the launching of the Consumer Welfare Month, Makabayan Bayan and price monitoring board at the Rodin's Mercato Trade Center in Roxas City, Capiz. EDWIN BACASNO

Lawmaker dares Church to live debate

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christine F. Reguyon

THE CATHOLIC Church has been challenged to a live debate over a bill that would define the government's family planning policy and implement programs to address overpopulation.

A national debate will give the people the prospect and true information on the issues and unmask the peddlers of lies and purveyors of misinformation," Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman said yesterday in a statement.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and allied groups are to hold a protest rally today at the Luneta Grandstand in Manila against the proposed law as well as the controversial "Lipke Build" program of the Department of Health.

Lagman also urged the Church to desist from coercively spreading wrong information and pressuring congressmen to oppose the Responsible Parenthood and Population Management Act of 1998.

The Church's damning insinuations against House Bill No. 4773 have crept from the pulpits to congressional offices," he said, adding that some of his colleagues "trumpeted" or mouthed only militants' line support after "incongruous" talked to them or sent

LAWMAKER, A2

2005 BUDGET

₱302B for debts; ₱290B for salaries

A FIRE GAFFA approach to "deconstructing the (P907.56-bill lion) budget" allocates that is for debt service over social services, Sen. Ralph Recto said yesterday.

"The per capita spending for interest payments is P3,031 this year. Per education, it's about P1,600. Health, it's less than P200 per Filipino in our you, or about P13 a month," he said.

Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the controversial House-approved budget that the Senate adopted on Tuesday prioritized the "consequence" of debt service and government payroll over social services.

He said the outlay for debt service, fee principal payments, stood at P561.7 billion, while the allocation for government payroll was P309.2 billion.

"For every budget peso, 31 centavos will go to interest payments on the debt of the government, and 32 centavos will be for the salaries of it's constitutional workers," Recto said in a statement.

Of the remaining 25 centavos, 17 centavos will be released off to local government as part of their share of the national taxes, he said, reflecting to the P151 billion in internal revenue allotments.

After declaring the amount for government supplies and operations, what is left of the budget pesos is a measly eight centavos for infrastructure projects," Recto said.

The allotment for infrastructure projects translates to P72 billion, an amount that falls short of the P222 billion needed to lessen

FULL STORY

Tarlac councilor shot dead

By Ronaldo Olano
PDI Central Luzon Bish

TARLAC CITY—A city official supporting striking workers of Hacienda Luisita was shot and killed here yesterday, fueling fears of more violence as the year-major comes around to the family of former President Corazon Aquino.

Councilor Abelardo Ladera, 41, a member of the left-wing party-list group Bayan Muna, died from a single bullet wound in the chest while being rushed to Central Luzon Doctors Hospital, police said.

Ladera was buying pan de bas pregnancy at an auto supply store in Barangay Bamban to around 1 p.m. when he was shot, police said. His companion, identified as Alberto Bobadilla, was unhurt.

Bayan Muna and other militant leaders strongly condemned the killing and pointed

LADERA, A10

What's in a name change? Mapuans seek investigation

By Tina G. Santos

AMBOAY over the impending change of name of Mapúa Institute of Technology (MIT) to Mapúa College, the National Alliance of Mapúa Alumni (Nama) is seeking a formal congressional probe on the real motive for dropping the name of an 89-year-old school-turned-accredited-to-valid-reputation for its achievements and engineering programs.

Mcmillan Mayor Rufus "Pilo" D. Lacerpe, Nama spokesperson, also called on all concerned to unite and fight for the retention of the name of their alma mater. (See story on Page B-1.)

Lacerpe said Nama strongly believed the "Technician Group of Companies, which bought the school from the Mapúa family in 1995, may want to change the Mapúa name to escape tax liabilities.

Citing the country's premier conglomerate, the Technician group also owns world-class Malayan Insurance, Republic Biscuit Corporation Banking Group, and business interests in

MAPUA, B-1

HELPING HAND FROM DOWN UNDER: Australian Ambassador Bob Poore reaches out to the children of the Manoba Mangyang tribe in Manking village, Davao City where some men a learning center built and equipped by the Australian Embassy. Education Assistance for Mindanao.

ninoyaquino.com for sale on eBay

By Joey G. Alarilla
INQ7.net

THEY say you can buy and sell almost anything on eBay. On world's biggest online auction site, Filipinos, however, might be surprised to find out that domain names associated with Philippine hero Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. are now being sold to the highest bidder.

Ninoyaquino.com is now eBay Item No. 6718677251, with the auction starting on Feb. 28 and ending on March 10. The starting price is 99 cents.

The auction comes shortly after the Philippines celebrated on Feb. 25 the 19th anniversary of the first Edsa People Power Revolution that ousted the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and that swept Aquino's widow Corazon Aquino, to power in 1986.

So far, no one has made a bid for the domain. But if the eBay item description by

GOING, going, gone. The auction of Ninoy Aquino's future website is ongoing until March 10. Starting price is 99 cents. The winner can also bought the domain name but none the president likely is here.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2005

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Not all JIs are Indons, says envoy

JI-Abu linkup worries experts on antiterror

THE ABU Sayyaf kidnap gang is slowly transforming into a major terrorist group capable of carrying out Bali-type attacks with the help of the Jemaah Islamiyah regional terror group, experts said yesterday.

"The Abu Sayyaf is back in business and we should be very concerned," said Zachary Abuza, director of the Asian Islam studies program at Simmons College in Boston, after a lecture in Manila.

The JI's strategy is to "insert" itself in conflict areas and foment sectarian violence and there has been evidence to suggest that the Abu Sayyaf has received some form of training from them, Abuza said.

The Abu Sayyaf, a small Muslim group that operates in several islands in Mindanao, gained notoriety in 2000 and 2001 with a series of kidnappings of Western tourists, including Americans.

More recently, the group has claimed credit for the Jan bombing of a ferry on Manila Bay last year that killed more than 100 people, and simultaneous bombings of three targets in Manila, Davao and General Santos cities last month that left 13 people dead.

Sinister conspiracy

Abuza, an acknowledged expert on Asian terrorism, noted that the Abu Sayyaf's recent bombing attacks appear to have the hallmarks of JI, whose alleged leader Abu Bakar Bashir was convicted in Jakarta yesterday for taking part in a "sinister conspiracy" that led to the Bali bombings in Indonesia that left 202 dead in 2002.

At the moment, Abuza said the Abu Sayyaf has the capability of carrying out "relatively small" bombings compared to the attacks elsewhere in the region that were blamed on JI, which has been using car bombs.

"Technologically, they haven't quite crossed the threshold that the JI has," Abuza said, but "they are totally into" learning quick.

"There is no reason why they can't learn this stuff," he said, noting that bomb-making materials were readily available in Mindanao.

He noted that Philippine authorities last week arrested two Indonesians and a Malaysian member of JI in connection with a foiled plot to bomb US and local targets. Arrested with them was an Abu Sayyaf member, and police said a 14-man Abu Sayyaf cell was still operating somewhere in Manila.

"The Abu Sayyaf" re-entered the arenas of terrorism, "with the ferry bombing, Abuza said.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzalez had earlier called the Abu Sayyaf "the most dangerous" Muslim militant group in the Philippines.

Even more so than the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the main Muslim separatist group waging rebellion in the south since 1978, Gonzalez said in a briefing paper to the government.

"Say what you want about the MILF, but it has never engaged in an all-out mission [war]; it has never made this into a religious war," he said.

Bali-type

He said more and more Filipino Christians were also being recruited to join the "Bali-type jihad" (Jihad is Islamic movement spearheaded by the Abu Sayyaf, which authorities believe to number around 400 from a high of over 1,000 members in 2002).

Julkipli Wadi, a professor in Islamic studies at the University of the Philippines, said that it was natural for the Abu Sayyaf to seek "Bali-type" outside of the country.

"It is a way to broaden their network and boost their organization," Wadi said, but added that the group has a long way to go before it acquires the capabilities of the JI.

"To be able to say that they have become a major regional terrorist group is an overstatement in the sense that this could be part of an attempt [by the military] to just prop up a supposedly local bandit group," Wadi said.

"Even before this rhetoric on terrorism, there is already the ASG. Except that now they may have grown big with the alleged presence of the JI," he said.

The government earlier said the Abu Sayyaf was a "spent force" after a US-backed counter-military operation began in 2000 and flushed them out from their southern strongholds.

The group was founded in the early 1990s by Afghan-trained mujahidin Abubakar Abdurajak Janjalani to fight for a separate state in Mindanao. Janjalani died in a clash with police in 1998 and the forces within the group disintegrated into banditry, specializing in kidnapping.

In 2000 it kidnapped and later massacred 20 a group of mostly European tourists, and the 84 hostage year three Americans and a group of Filipinos. Two of the Americans died in captivity and the Abu Sayyaf earned a place in the terrorist organization list of the US state department. AFP

Kidnappers seize 2 businessmen in Iligan, demand ransom

ILIGAN CITY—A still unidentified group snatched two businessmen in Iligan City on Wednesday evening, the military said yesterday.

Col. Benjamin Dolorfino, commander of the Joint Task Force Ranao, identified the victims as Gerald Tomawis, paid employee Nicanor Jarail.

Dolorfino said Tomawis and Jarail left Jarail's house for a drive around the city about 10 p.m. Wednesday and failed to return.

He said that morning, the kidnappers got in touch with Jarail's wife informing her of the ransom demand.

"Engineer Jarail's wife received a call from the abductors yesterday morning and demanded an undisclosed amount," Dolorfino told the inquirers.

He said Jarail also managed to talk with his wife and told her that he had a head injury.

Dolorfino said Jarail was hit in the head when he tried to resist the abduction.

Soldiers mounted checkpoints along Quezon Boulevard, Hill Mountain Range

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Miriam doubts accord on Spratlys

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MIRIAM Defensor-Santiago yesterday expressed skepticism over reports that the Philippines had settled its dispute with China over ownership of the oil-rich Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

"I don't think that there has been an agreement on who owns the Spratlys," said Santiago, chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, in reaction to reports that the decades-long dispute had been resolved.

If there was any agreement at all, Santiago insisted next, it was an agreement on setting aside the issue of ownership of the Spratlys and focusing instead on revenue-sharing arrangements on the use of natural resources in the chain of islands.

"I think the agreement is, as China has always advocated, that the issue of sovereignty has been sidestepped and that the parties will focus instead on the revenue-sharing arrangement or profit-sharing arrangement concerning the natural resources of the Spratly islands particularly the suspected oil deposits," she told reporters.

The Philippines said on Wednesday that a dispute with Beijing over the Spratlys had been resolved and that both sides would work together to exploit the area's oil deposits.

The team-up, Beijing news agency quoted Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, who was in China last Tuesday and Wednesday for a visit, as saying that "disputes and conflicts in the [Spratlys] are all over now."

Romulo ratified a memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation signed last November, according to reports. The agreement was to train South China Sea from a regional flash point into an area of cooperation, peace and development.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye, however, said the government was not meant to abandon the Philippines' claim.

"I don't think that's the intention," said Ignacio Bunye, when asked if the government had given up the fight.

On the question whether the "understanding" between Manila and Beijing would give the Philippines an assurance that China would stop its expansive activities in the Spratlys, Bunye only had this to say: "I believe China would be a very good neighbor."

Santiago, however, welcomed the possibility of a future defense agreement between Manila and Beijing, saying this would be a "good hallback position" if ever the Mutual Defense Treaty between Manila and Washington, D.C., is terminated.

Philippine and US forces have been holding a series of joint exercises for years under the RP/US Visiting Forces Agreement, which is now under review.

"In any event, China is well on its way to becoming the next superpower. Today the United States is the sole superpower of the world, but it's on the decline," she said.

Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the caption of a front page photo misstated the name of the US ambassador to the Philippines. The ambassador's name is Francis J. Ricciardone—not Richard Ricciardone.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a headline in the Business section for Page 1 should have read "Solon: power bills' recognition Cagle"—not "Power from solar system Fully-energize Cagle."

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, #24 Industry Online Home Avenue, corner Misamis St. cor. Mindoro St., Mandaluyong City; fax Nos. 897-8783/84; e-mail: gdlirio@inquirer.com.ph; and dumdum@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Rodrigo, readers' advocate, at the same address and fax/e-mail as those of the city editor and e-mail address rodrigo@inquirer.com.ph.

Migrante slams KL treatment of Pinoys

By Jerome Aning

THE CRACKDOWN crackdown against illegal immigrants in Malaysia is anything but humane, contrary to the Philippine government's assertion, the migrant workers group Migrante said.

Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado yesterday criticized Malacañang for "trying to project" the crackdown as humane and saying that no Filipinos would be harmed.

Regalado said the government was "hoping" on getting "even Bingoh-zoh" who had unlawfully left Malaysia earlier to re-employed in that country, while not doing anything about the welfare of those who had stayed behind.

Regalado recalled that Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had told the Malaysian government to avoid "go-hard" against the estimated 1.6 million undocumented foreign immigrants in Malaysia following the end of the amnesty period last month.

Most of the illegals are from Indonesia and the Philippines. Others are from Burma (Myanmar), Bangladesh, Nepal, India, East Timor and Sri Lanka.

"How can Malacañang say the condition of undocumented migrants...who are clinging to jobs in the construction, plantation and service industries [there] in the face of arrest, physical abuse, [and] country—was not a worsening situation," Regalado said.

His latest report by non-government organization Migrante (Migrante's News) in Malaysia and Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrants in Hong Kong revealed the following:

• All Malaysian prisons were filled with illegal aliens even before the crackdown began on March 1. The government was looking for vacant buildings to house more undocumented workers.

• Members of the 360,000-strong People's Volunteer Corps (also called Rela) tasked to implement the crackdown will be paid 80 ringgits (P1,040) daily plus 100 ringgits (P1,650) for every undocumented alien arrested.

• The Relas were not trained to humane arrest procedures, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. Hence, the crackdown was highly open to abuse of authority and due process will not be observed.

• Undocumented Filipinos would be subjected to arrest, a minimum 14 day detention, caning and deportation.

• Those who entered legally but overstayed their visas would not be caned. There are no guidelines, however, to distinguish between undocumented workers and those who had run away to escape inhuman employers.

• As of 2004 Filipino undocumented workers were found by Migrante to have cases of unpaid wages. Their visas were not renewed and most had become undocumented.

• Those who would opt to legalize their status must pay up to 3,000 ringgits (P42,000) to the Malaysian government.

Migrante, along with human rights groups in the region, called on the Malaysian government to stop the crackdown and respect the human rights of undocumented migrants.

But Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, after meeting with Prime Minister Badawi, expressed satisfaction on the "fair" treatment Filipino workers were getting in Malaysia.

"The Filipino workers are being treated fairly and in a humane way," said Romulo, who ate out with foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar and Home Minister Sani Khalid. With Aaliyah Alipala and Ruby A. San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau; AFP, *Cebu region dr | AP*

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Gov't may go to court on SMC

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government is considering going to court to stop San Miguel Corp. from pursuing its P38 billion stock rights offering that could dilute the government stake in the food and beverage giant.

But PCGG chair Haydee Yorac said that the possibility was "remote" as it could be construed as government interference in business.

PCGG commissioner William Ordoñez said the move "might come close to the line in terms of economics," something which the antigraft body did not want to do.

Asked if Yorac, the PCGG was considering, via options, including court action, to stop San Miguel from going ahead with the stock offering which would lead to a dilution of the value of the government's shares.

The other options involve a partial or complete participation in the stock offering. A complete participation would mean the government would have to kick out an estimated P43 billion.

"But we still have to think about asserting the funds," Yorac said.

Yorac said the issue was only how much "with the best interests of the government and the economy foremost in mind."

She said the PCGG was consulting with the business groups on the best action to take. Alexis Pope

Distributed by NewspaperDirect

Inquirer cartoonist shares NCCA plum

THE PHILIPPINE Daily Inquirer editorial cartoonist Gilbert Daroy and the Philippine Star's Rene Aranda tied for the top prize of last month's "Sining-Guhit" editorial cartoon and comic strip contest of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) in this year's National Arts Month.

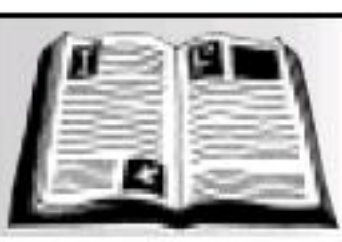
Daroy's entry, with an anticorruption theme, bested 113 other editorial and cartoon strip entries from national and regional newspapers.

INQUIRER comic strip artists Jose Miguel "Jomike" Tejido of "Mikrokosmos" and Steven Pabalinas "Divine Comedy" also got honorable mention awards for their entries.

Cash prizes and certificates were handed over to the winners by Malacañang officials led by presidential adviser on culture and NCCA Executive Director Cecile Guidote Alvarez, government Mass Media Group Secretary Cerge Remonde, Cabinet secretary Ricardo Saludo, senior deputy executive secretary Waldo Flores, and Presidential Council For Values Formation Deputy Secretary General Roger Arienda.

The awarding was held at the Malacañang grounds during the Monday flag raising ceremony where National Artist Lucrecia "King" Kasilag's works were interpreted by the Philippine Women's University (PWU) Music Ensemble and the Bayanihan Dance Troupe. The contests were supported by the Publishers Association of the Philippines Inc.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Friday, March 4, 2005
3rd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Hos 14:2-10
Gospel: Mark 12:28-34

One of the teachers of the Law came up to Jesus and asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answered, "The first is: Hear, Israel! The Lord, our God, is One Lord; and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. And after this comes another one: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these two."

The teacher of the Law said to him, "Well spoken, Master; you are right when you say that he is one and there is no other. To love him with all our heart, with all our understanding and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves is more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice."

Jesus approved this answer and said, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Commentary

This is the week of the law and the call to obedience as a response to believing in Jesus' law of love. Now a teacher who admires Jesus and asks the wisdom question: Which commandment is first before all others? And Jesus answers in the tradition of Judaism—to love God and your neighbor with all your heart and soul and mind and resources. The teacher praises Jesus knowing the connection between love of God and one another and true worship or sacrifice to God. But knowing isn't enough. Jesus tells him that he is not far from the kingdom. It is a subtle invitation to believe in him, and follow him into the kingdom of peace and justice that declares to the world the presence of God among us. But it does not say that the man responded. Lord, draw us closer to your presence, intent on obeying you, not just knowing the right answers to the questions. Amen.

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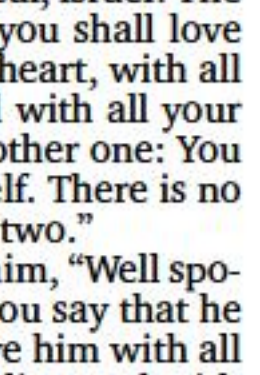
SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES



POLITICAL LAW (CONSTITUTIONAL LAW)/REMEDIAL LAW (CRIMINAL PROCEDURE)—In criminal cases, the accused is entitled to a speedy disposition of the cases against him—Section 16, Article III of the 1987 Constitution provides that all persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial or administrative bodies. The "judicial bodies" envisaged in the said provision include the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Special Prosecutor. Rule 115, Section 1(h) of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure further provides that the accused has the right to have a speedy, impartial and public trial. The said rule requires that the arraignment of the accused should be held within 30 days from the date the court acquired jurisdiction over the person of the accused, unless a shorter period is provided by special law or unless excusable delays as provided in Rule 119, Section 10 of the Rules are attendant. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Corpuz vs Sandiganbayan, G. R. No. 162214, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

Lawmen playing catch-up with terrorists, says expert

SOME quick arrests after a series of deadly bombings last month helped the government to reassure people it is well on top of the threat posed by Islamic militants.

But the truth, many analysts say, is that the authorities are mostly playing catch-up, hobbled by a lack of funds, poor cooperation among agencies, corruption and the difficulty of infiltrating the close-knit groups.

Despite years of training and on-the-ground advice by United States Special Forces, the Philippines is seen as one of the weakest links against terrorism in Southeast Asia, reinforced by a tendency to accuse and parade suspects on the slimmest of evidence. *(Related stories on Page A2)*

"I have learned never to take Philippine government statements at face value until lots of other evidence is in," said Sidney Jones, an expert on Islamic militancy in the region at the International Crisis Group.

"I get the sense they don't really know what's going on," Jones said.

A week after three blasts killed 13 people and wounded more than 150 in Manila and the cities of Davao and General Santos in Mindanao on Valentine's Day, two suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group were arrested over the bomb on a bus in the capital.

Police say both have confessed and that there is at least one witness who saw them board the bus.

But the background of one suspect highlights the complex and fast-changing nature of Islamic militancy in the Philippines that the authorities struggle to cope with.

Abu Khalil Trinidad was a Christian who converted to Islam, police say, before he was trained in bomb-making on Mindanao.

Trinidad would fit a recent pattern of these "Balik-Islam" converts carrying out attacks with Abu Sayyaf, including the country's worst terrorist attack in February 2004 when a bomb sparked a fire on a ferry, killing at least 116 people.

"That's what gives them the biggest headache right now, because that's allowed these groups to penetrate into Luzon and Manila," said one security analyst who asked not to be identified.

The police, military and Anti-Terrorism Task Force share responsibility for combating militant groups and preventing attacks. The result is often confusion rather than cohesion.

"As bad as it is in the First World, it gets worse in conditions of scarcity. I don't get a sense they are working well together and bridging bureaucratic hurdles," the analyst said.

About half of the annual P1 billion in intelligence funds goes to the Office of the President. Not all of that money finds its way to the front lines.

During last year's elections, opposition politicians charged that the funds were used for dirty tricks such as spying on them and bankrolling President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign.

One of the biggest obstacles to improving intelligence has been infiltrating militant groups, a difficult task for even the most well-trained and funded operations.

The job has been made harder by the rise in Mindanao of a more hard-line, Middle East-influenced Islam in recent years.

Officials say Philippine intelligence was unprepared to meet this threat, having dealt with more secular Muslim rebels who were easily bought with money and government positions. ***Reuters***

Small players hike oil prices

BARELY a week after hiking their prices, new players Seaoil Petroleum Corp. and Flying V will again increase gasoline, diesel and kerosene prices by 50 centavos a liter today and tomorrow.

Seaoil's price adjustment will take effect at 6 p.m. today, while that of Flying V will be implemented at 6 a.m. tomorrow.

The oil firms said the continued rise in international crude and finished product prices had forced them to increase pump prices.

"We will endeavor to reflect on a weekly basis international product price movements while continuing to provide discounts to public utilities," Seaoil president Glenn Yu said in a text message yesterday evening.

Other oil firms, including refiners Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., have yet to announce their own price adjustments as of press time.

Petron, Total (Philippines) Corp. and Eastern Petroleum Corp. said they would continue to monitor price movements before making any final decisions.

The regional benchmark Dubai crude jumped to a spot price of $42.71 a barrel yesterday, even higher than the high spot price of $42 a barrel registered on Feb. 25. ***Abigail L. Ho***

GMA prods Congress anew on revenue bills

PRAYER BEEF Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday urged Congress anew to speed up the passage of her proposed revenue measures, warning that the country cannot continue to rely on borrowing to finance development.

"We have to stop financing our development by relentless borrowing, we have to finance our development through our own revenues," the President said during a visit to Bicutan City yesterday.

Ms Arroyo said Congress has to immediately approve the new taxes to deal with the years of accumulated deficits that have led to the country's "very high debt."

Latest figures show that the national debt has risen to P5.8 trillion.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the national debt can still be managed so long as the executive and legislative branches get their act together.

"[The debt] is manageable provided we are able to come up with the appropriate measures that will bring in the revenues, the revenues that will plug the tax leakages and the measures that will introduce efficiencies in government," Bunye told reporters.

He said the government has come up with a fiscal reform program that included tax reforms, especially improved tax collection and anti-corruption measures.

"What we need is the joint support of executive and legislative so we could move closer to being able to fully address our debt problems," he said.

Despite the rift between the Senate and House over the passage of the 2005 budget, Malacañang expressed confidence that the two chambers can overcome their differences and pass just as swiftly the even more controversial measure increasing the value-added tax.

Last Monday, the Senate decided to adopt the House version of the P987.6-billion budget, paving the way for the approval of the measure without the need for a bicameral conference committee.

Even with the Senate and Senate at loggerheads over the controversial approval of the budget, Bunye said the President was "building on to the word of the Senate leadership that the VAT bill could be passed before the session ends."

Christina Mendez

AMOS

Where's Rachel?

RACHEL Soriano Amos, 16, of 8th Ave., Bgy. Socorro, Bisaya Cubao, Quezon City has been missing for one month.

According to her grandmother Lourdes, Rachel went home packed her things and left very early in the morning. She is a Link TV student with the reference MPC05019. She has not been in touch with former classmates or relatives for the past month.

Any information regarding her whereabouts may be the relayed to the following numbers: (02) 428-7949, (0917) 508-9211; and (0920) 451-2049 and look for Christian or Gladys.

School founded in 1925 by first registered Filipino architect

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IN THE KNOW

THE SANTO Tomas Institute of Technology was founded on Jan. 28, 1925 by Don Tomas Mapúa, the first registered Filipino architect who introduced an educational institution that shall emphasize the importance of science and technology and create an impact on the economy and the quality of life of the Filipinos." He was one of the first Filipino scholars sent by the government to the US during the American regime. He finished high school at Boone's Preparatory School in Redondo, California, and graduated from Cornell University in 1911 with a degree in architecture.

Aware that many Filipinos were deprived of the opportunity to study because they had to work during the day, he opened a non-sectarian night school for working students in a rented commercial building on Cervantes Street in Quiapo, Manila. The school initially started out with only two courses offered—engineering and architecture—handled by a faculty of 12 professors. Three years later, the school offered high school to give students a better foundation for technical studies in college. By 1946, the seven degree programs were added—mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, chemistry, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering.

After the liberation of Manila, Mapúa, which was occupied by the text, resumed operations at a new location at the southern portion of the block bounded by Quezon Ave., Avenida Rizal, Gen. M. Bertis, Misericordia Street (now Tomas Mapúa Street). The school compound was divided into two quadrangles that separated the college and the high school divisions.

In the late '50s, the institute acquired a property in Intramuros to house its architecture and upper engineering degree programs. Its general engineering programs and the high school department remained in the Quezon Ave compound.

When Don Tomas died on Dec. 22, 1965, his only son Oscar R. Mapúa took over the reins of the school. With the expansion of its facilities, the Intramuros complex took in the entire collegiate department in 1973. More degree programs were also established like industrial engineering, industrial design and computer engineering.

Enters Nacheongco

On March 17, 2000, Oscar R. Mapúa passed away and his son, architect Oscar Jr., took over the presidency.

In December 1999, the ownership of Mapúa was acquired 100 percent by educator-entrepreneur headed by Antonio de Alfonso T. Nacheongco through a company now known as Mapúa Inc. for almost a billion pesos.

Nacheongco (whose "Nacheongco" is a diplomat, philanthropist, business and civic leader and acknowledged by his peers as a leader in Philippine insurance, banking, investments, construction, mining, power, oil exploration, real estate, telecommunications, agribusiness, manufacturing and trading. In 1998, he was honored as "Management Man of the Year" by the Management Association of the Philippines (MAP). He businesses include Mad Commercial Bank, top Corp., MEGA Equities, Great Pacific Life Holdings, The Philippine Management and Investment Corp., among others.

Aside from its schools in Intramuros and Muralla, four streets in Manila, Mapúa opened in April 2002 its Makati campus in the former Bicol Commercial Banking Corp. building, located between Ayala and Gil Puyat Avenues. The campus now houses its Information and Technology Center and its schools of nursing, accountancy and business administration.

15,000 students

According to its webpage, Mapúa at present offers 26 courses and six graduate programs. It has 15,000 students in the college level and claims to be the biggest engineering school in the Philippines, which accounts for about 8 percent of engineering graduates every year. The institute also runs a pre-engineering high school with a population of about 1,000 students.

Sources: *Phil Architects and Mapúa web page* (http://www.mapua.edu.ph)

What's in a name change?

(Continued)

universities, travel, tourism, construction, engineering and technology.

"We believe that the Lower House as well as the Senate should institute a probe against Mapúa to College not only to help us in our claim to preserve the name of a reputable Philippine educational institution, but to save the country from losing billions of tax revenues," Gutierrez said.

As of yesterday afternoon, black remained the campus color as the students calling themselves United Mapúans continued to come out in droves to show support.

The protesters said that changing their school's name would be tantamount to disregarding the legacy of the school's founder, Tomas Mapúa.

4 students suspended

The fight, which began on Feb. 14 (Valentine's day) yesterday after four students were suspended for allegedly violating school rules and regulations in their protest against the change of name.

The students were suspended despite calls to prevent extremity by Mapúa president Reynaldo Vea but nobody would be penalized for the mass action because the school respected freedom of expression and also wanted to know the students' sentiments.

In his turn-over letter issued on Wednesday, Antonio L. Tinio Jr., vice president for student affairs and policy for students, cited specific grounds for the suspension of the four students.

Mateo said the four students are barred from entering the institute's premises in accordance with Section 77 of the Manual of Regulations for Private Schools as issued through DepEd Order No. 92.

Citing the investigation conducted by the committee on decorum, Mateo stressed that the four clearly participated in rowdyism, an act which disrupted the normal operations of the school.

'Shallow'

However, one of them suspended claimed that the grounds cited by the school for the suspension "were shallow and baseless."

Mateo particularly pointed to the incidents that happened on Feb. 28 and 28 where the four students were allegedly at the forefront of the group that barged in front of the entrance gate of Mapúa's campus in Intramuros, Manila, forming a human chain, thus preventing students from attending their classes.

The four also encouraged and participated in a noise barrage in front of the school during rally attacks that were hooking their horns and sounding their sirens, Mateo said, adding that the offending students also gave out flyers, pamphlets and other written documents supporting their cause.

'Threatening'

Mateo added that the four were likewise apprehended at the campus with a copy of an official memo from his office, which they reportedly had removed from the posting area.

"They are directly contributed to disrupting the teaching and non-teaching activities," Mateo said in his letter.

The suspended students were given 72 hours to submit their formal written explanations on why they should not be charged for the offenses.

They were also ordered to appear before the committee on decorum and investigation on Tuesday.

No consultation

Meynard Austria, a member of the core group fighting for the retention of the school's name, lamented that school officials did not consult them about the change of name.

"Our point is simple. The term Mapúan is imparted to us. Our parents enrolled us here as graduate as Mapúans, not as Mekenans," Austria said.

He decried that he and his fellow protesters were not informed of the administration and were in fact appreciative of the various technological advancements that the school had implemented.

"We do not even complain every time they increase our tuition fees. All we want is just for them to retain Mapúa's name in it," Austria said.

The Inquirer tried to reach Vea for comment but a member of his staff said he was in a meeting.

University status

But in an earlier interview, Vea said the name change was a step toward the school's expansion to a university. He said the school had started offering courses other than engineering and architecture since 2000 after the university by the Technology's group. The offering of additional courses was one of the requirements for attaining university status.

Mapúa's new courses are nursing, psychology, biotechnology and business administration.

Mapúa at present offers 26 courses and six graduate programs.

"If the school continued to be called Mapúa, are they clever might be a certain division also because the Mapúa course is closely associated with technology engineering. We told them," Vea said.

Vea also said the board had yet to set the date for the official change of the school's name.

He told students that the name Mapúa would still be used for the College of Engineering and Architecture of the Mapúan University since a university could name its colleges.

Vea added the name change was never meant to relegate Mapúa to the background.

"The institution is not to be ended. It never known and that is why we are going for university status," he said.

Taipans buying up schools

Lucio explained that schools and universities could very seasonal use to the government compared to other businesses and this could be the real reason why corporations like FEU and other Filipino Taipans" were re-investing their business closer to campuses.

Lucio pointed the problem was in price. "Business investors had already invested in educational institutions. The Lucio Tan group bought the University of the East in the '50s, Beato he perhaps owns the majority stake in the Asia Pacific College, and so on. FEU now has Mapúa at inventory."

Legacy

Cuenyo also called on all Filipinos to fight for the preservation of educational institutions—Mapúa included.

He said, "Educational institutions must not be for sale. Legacies are not commodity."

ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT?

Abalos seeks ₱1 B for ARMM election

By Jaresm Arieg

WHERE's my P1 billion?

Election chair Benjamin Abalos asked this yesterday as he appealed to lawmakers to give the poll body the budget it needed for the nonpartisan Regular Election (Barmm) elections in August and the continuing voters registration.

"We cannot come up with our mandated obligations if there is no money. We don't know how to proceed with the preparations we have started or about to start," Abalos said in a hastily called press conference.

The chief of the Commission on Elections said funding for the ARMM polls was supposed to be "inserted" when the Senate and the House of Representatives tackle the 2005 national budget at the bicameral conference committee level.

The Senate, however, passed on Tuesday its take this year's P907.96-billion spending package prepared by Malacañang and approved by the House. A bicameral conference committee now meets if there are conflicting provisions in the Senate and House versions of the bill.

Abalos is worried that Comelec may have to postpone again the ARMM elections scheduled for Aug. 8 if there is no budget for it by April or May.

And a further delay, he said, would also disrupt the schedule of pre-election activities.

Comelec is seeking P522 million from Congress if the ARMM elections are to be conducted manually. Another P204 million is needed if automated counting and election result transmission would be used. The registration is already using electronic data-capturing machines.

For the continuing registration of voters, the Comelec needs P369 million and another P73 million for the overseas absentee-voting registration.

Abalos explained that after the mid-of registration period on May 15, several weeks are needed to verify compliance of flying voters and double or multiple registrations and petitions to include or exclude registrants before Comelec can come up with permanent list of voters.

The Comelec also wants extra time to deploy its personnel and disseminate information, as well as distribute and test the automated counting machines, according to Abalos.

Abalos said that as of Feb. 25 there were 36,000 new voters, in addition to the 1.6 million old voters, who registered in the ARMM which covers the provinces of Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-tawi.

He said the poll body had petitioned the Supreme Court to allow the use for the ARMM polls of 200 to 250 of the 1,991 automated counting machines that were left idle after the high-profile ended a multi-million-peso deal between the Comelec and the Singapore consortium, supplier of the PCMs.

Scrap Senate, House urges

From page A1

because the two chambers.

But Defensor said his call for a unicameral legislature was actually nothing that the Senate was afraid when it made the suspension-denied move of adopting the House-approved version as his.

"All adopted the budget that they passed. Why told the should be the budget, so what are they complaining about?" Defensor said.

The senators adopted the House-approved budget, which provides for a reduced peak for net allowance of P126 million from P200 million for each senator and P40 million from P75 million for every House member, depending with the senate bicameral conference committee conflicting versions are reconciled.

Some senators said they decided to adopt the House version because of members of the House included in section three perk for not to file a million during the in order to collect.

Clear winner

But members of the House did not take this sitting down. They said the senators had been caught red-handed instigating part of the intelligence funds to boost the Senate's perk because other than the P1.2 billion for the senators adopted the House

From page A1

in the military's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), which is based here, as being behind it. The accusation was swiftly denied by Malacañang officials.

Ladlad's lobbying is part of the scheme to penetrate all those who are supporting the demands of the Hacienda Luisita farm and supporting workers against the farmlands management. Apparently, the people behind the scheme are the likes of Ladlad's, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said.

He noted that the two-term councilor, whose candidacy was endorsed by his party in last year's election, was a renowned local critic of Hacienda officials and an active supporter of the striking workers.

3 days for probers

Chief Supt. Reinhard Silorio, police regional commander, gave investigators three days to identify the killers. He said the Tarlac provincial police would be creating a special task force to crack down the killers.

Ladlad's companion, Sebastian, said he did not notice the gunmen approach the councilor, who he found the position, he said. Ladlad told him, "Bro, may tama ako [I've been shot]," and fell.

The attending doctor at the hospital, Dr. Romanel Hernandez, said Ladlad was have been shot from a distance.

"The slug fragmented as it penetrated the left side of his chest. He might have been hit from a distance as there were no signs of powder burns around the wound," Hernandez said.

But Senior Insp. Alfredo Magpali, investigation chief of the Tarlac police, said they still cannot tell whether the suspect was a sniper because a gun fired only a few feet from a victim would not show powder burns.

Police Insp. Leopoldo Bataoil, Philippine National Police spokesperson, said: "We condemn this killing, regardless of his [Ladlad's] political leanings."

Rising tension

"We will pursue this case. We will investigate to give justice to Ladlad and his family," he said.

Whoever did this [killing] easily succeeded in escaping the mountainous Rizal-Nueva Ecija-Aurora [Sierra Madre] range, Magpali said.

Ladlad, of Barangay Balbalo in Hacienda Luisita, was a supporter of the striking Central Azucarera de Tarlac Labor Union (Catlu) and the United Luisita Workers Union (Ulwu).

In interviews with the Inquirer on Wednesday, Ladlad said that resolving the conflict would take some time because management did not want to settle easily. "But members of Ulwu and Catlu are prepared to continue their struggle," he said in Filipino.

The official had earlier spoken of escalating tension in the city council calling for a congressional inquiry of the stock distribution option agreement (SDOA) in the plantation, among other issues.

Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, the Hacienda President's son, also denounced the killing of Ladlad, saying it would only increase the tension in the area at a time when his family was trying its best to resolve the labor row and provide help to the affected workers and their families.

Dialogue

"Although he was a leftist, he was willing to talk. He shouldn't have been killed," Aquino said. "Every tough we had differences, but he believed in dialogue rather than shooting up guns to achieve their goals."

Ocampo said Ladlad was well-regarded by the municipal council and other leaders of Ulwu and Catlu when they met with former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. on Nov. 16, 2004, a day before the striking workers were dispersed violently.

The source of our sympathies for the striking Hacienda workers, Ladlad and 3 Bataan Targets of black propaganda. Ladlad was singled to be New People's Army spokesperson Gregorio Rosal's magazine and therefore had connection with the NPA," the lawmaker said.

"I was accused of surreptitiously the Hacienda massacre that was alleged to be a communist plot," he added.

"We have no other suspects but the military. Who else would do it?" said Rolando de Castro, deputy secretary general of Bayan Muna.

Vigilante?

De Castro noted that Bataan officials had earlier tagged Ladlad's in-vigilante of the area.

In a statement, the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said "the Nolcom and the Cojuangcos are the ones who would definitely benefit with the death and silencing of the good councilor. Because he always exposed their plight of the workers in the hacienda."

"It not the blood of their comrades, adding that the same must pass on to success of the national budget, "make sure everything is all right because you might get what you wished for. In this case, the senators passed the House version, so we have to live with that version."

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) said

Country saves P6.9 billion

Sen. Pimentel Lacson defended the Senate move, saying it saved the country P6.9 billion, the amount needed if the peak barred was increased to P200 million and P75 million for each senator and congressman, respectively.

In the House, neophyte Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano (NP-Taguig-Pateros) canvassed his colleagues against vetoes-binding over less because the two chambers.

Cayetano said the House should be rebuked for earlier ratifying the passage of the architectural budget.

The matter just bothered, said Cayetano, drawing that the House failure to increase the "efficiency of spending means on the side of some programs that will disarm benefit the poor only after the Congress is falling work."

Bystander

He said House members should "learn from our mistakes,"

₱302B for debts; ₱290B for wages

From page A1

from "national dirt roads into two-lane concrete highways," he said.

Little nourishment

"While at first glance the nearly trillion-peso budget is big, what unfortunately remains is a little nourishment can be passed from it," Bayan said.

Among the agencies, the Department of Education (DepEd) got the biggest allocation at P111 billion. The Congressional committee that scheduled the budget hearings for the Department of Public Works and Highways, P403 billion; Department of Health, P32.3 billion; Department of Interior and Local Government, P93.9 billion; Department of Agrarian Reform, P14.7 billion; Department of Agriculture, P54.2 billion; Department of Health, P32.3 billion; Department of Transportation and Communications and Department of Justice, P8 billion each, and Department of Finance, P6.8 billion. — DJ Yap, Jerome Aning and Marlon Ramos

Tarlac councilor shot dead

From page A1

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ninoyaquino.com for sale on eBay

From page A1

ninoyaquino.com posted at http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&ih=&item=6760577260 result.

The domain source is that of Ninoy Aquino who was assassinated in 1983 for trying to oust opposed president Ferdinand Marcos. It has been rumored that Imelda Marcos was behind the assassination (see) nevertheless, the murder on the tarmac of the Manila International airport marked the first major democratic peaceful revolution which catapulted his wife Corazon Aquino to the Philippine presidency.

'I need the money'

"It is unfortunate that I have to sell my rights to the domain name, but frankly I need the money. I have [the] LOT of people saying there interest in it including his wife Ms. Cris Ponciano,"

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Sana'a
Aden
Djibouti

Liposuction not just for vanity, says DOH chief

By Christine V. Esguerra

IF YOU think liposuction is all vanity, think again.

A recent survey by the Philippine Medical Association showed 80 percent of women who went through the procedure did so because of work, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said yesterday.

"Most women, he said, wanted to go ahead to work to the entertainment, hotel or tourism industry where a nice body is essentially a factor.

Only 20 percent availed of the expensive procedure out of sheer vanity, Dayrit said, quoting PMA president Ike Castro.

"It's a way of trying to make themselves physically competitive, so someone can argue that it's a survival issue," Dayrit told reporters in a press conference.

But not to already turn-clear he is calling it not liposuction reported to the DOH, the government is looking to regulate—if it can even do so—the cosmetic technique popular among local celebrities.

"As of [the moment, we're studying the facts and we're working with the PMA. We'll see what needs to be done," Dayrit said.

At present, he admitted he's not there's a problem with jurisdiction.

Unlike in hospitals, the Department of Health cannot just regulate clinics offering liposuction because they fall under local government that provide them with business permits, he explained.

"The DOH cannot just go in and say 'you're all closed,'" he said. "What the DOH does is register licenses for hospitals. So if they're not hospitals, the DOH has no regulatory jurisdiction over them."

VP to hold monthly meets with shelter agencies

By Cynthia D. Rubrico

VICE PRESIDENT Noli de Castro yesterday approved a monthly meeting with all heads of key shelter agencies as well as the major players in the housing industry in order to effectively implement the government's housing program.

De Castro, chair of Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, made the announcement after meeting with representatives from the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Subdivision and Housing Developers Association Inc. (SHDA) in the HUDCC office in Quezon City.

He said there was a need to provide the homeowners with the private sector in order to identify problem areas in housing projects.

"The PCCI-SHDA commitment to the holding of regular meetings with HUDCC and key shelter agencies in line with their plan to launch the holding of 'one-stop-shops' for housing projects.

In their meeting, the Core PCCI executive for construction and housing division said the housing projects would be implemented faster and easier through "one-stop-shops" also for the HUDCC-projects-pursuant.

De Castro stressed that coordinated housing was for poverty and urged them private sector to come up with more projects to alleviate the same.

Boman: 69

RICARDO C. BOMAN, a businessman of New Manila, Quezon City, died last May 1 at the age of 69.

He is survived by his wife Tita, children Perry, Hilda, Alma, Angie and Ricardo, another Ricardo and siblings Toning and Baby Grey and Tita.

The body lies at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Memorial Park in Manila. A requiem Mass will be said on Saturday, March 5, at 9:30 a.m., after which the body will be cremated at Paramaya Pet, Quezon City.

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

Unpopular HK leader has quit, reports say

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, whose unpopular leadership led to pro-democracy protests in the city, has resigned, sources close to the government and Beijing said on Wednesday.

A source close to Hong Kong's government, who declined to be identified, said that Chinese leaders in Beijing accepted Tung's unsolicited letter.

Tung's move comes just weeks after he was publicly reprimanded by Chinese President Hu Jintao for poor performance over the past seven years.

Another source close to Beijing said that Chinese leader had already agreed to Tung stepping down but he would only formally resign after being made vice-chairman of a top advisory body to China's parliament, a position Tung is also said certain to get over the next 10 days.

Giving unidentified sources, Hong Kong newspapers reported Tung's right hand man, Chief Secretary Donald Tsang, would become acting chief executive after Tung steps down.

But asked to confirm if Tung had stepped down, a government spokesperson said: "We don't comment on speculation."

Tung has kept people guessing. "I know you are concerned about many questions. I will reply at an appropriate time," he said after arriving in Beijing for a meeting of the Chinese parliament's top advisory body.

The dissident newspaper said Tung headed to his resignation before the Chinese New Year, which started on Feb. 9, adding it was prompted after an emergency meeting of the politburo.

Tung, 67, sold to pro-Chinese officials that his health had been deteriorating, the newspapers said.

Rumors of his departure have swirled since Tung was made a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on Monday, which analysts saw as a precursor to being elevated to vice chief of the body.

Such a promotion would pave the way for a graceful exit for Tung and save face for Beijing, which has often had to defend the increasingly unpopular leader handpicked by the mainland's leadership, analysts said.

Tung, a businessman with little political experience, was chosen by Beijing to lead Hong Kong after the executive arm British rule to the colony of Chinese rule in 1997.

But the honeymoon skipping season's meant his term is strong, marked by major policy gaffes, resignations and scandals involving key lieutenants and close associates.

Widespread anger with Tung's leadership ignited growing calls for full voting rights and massive street protests, alarming communist Beijing, who feared it could lose control of the city.

But calls for more democracy have eased since last April, when Beijing flatly rejected universal suffrage for the territory for at least the next four years. A second protest drew only a few thousand people, compared with half million who took to the streets for rallies in 2003 and 2004.

Democrats who favor Tung called for Tung to quit and avoid feelings about the start of the recession, speculating that it could be a ploy by Beijing to tighten its grip on the city that was promised a high degree of autonomy when it returned to Chinese rule.

It is not clear if any replacement would smooth the start of Tung's term, which ends in mid-2007, or be confirmed by a Beijing-linked electoral college to take charge for a full five-year term.

Some political analysts say the latter is likely and that Beijing may have crafted the timing of Tung's departure and the ascendance of Tsang, who is well liked, to stave off demands from the pro-democracy camp to participate in the electoral process. Reuters

UPDATED photo released May 31, 2004 by the Washington Post shows a US soldier with his right arm and fist cocked, appearing prepared to strike one detainee in a pile of detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison, outside Baghdad. Chino March 3 accused the US of serious human rights violations and told Washington to clean up its own act before "wantonly trampling on the sovereignty of other countries." AFP

TIT FOR TAT

China slams US rights record

BEIJING—China fired back Thursday at US criticism of its human rights record, issuing a report that denounced the United States for officials ranging from allowing crime and poverty at home to abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The report—issued normally in response to the US state department's global human rights survey—savaged the American military of committing "serious slaughters," killing thousands of foreign civilians and torturing detainees.

"The atrocity of US troops abusing Iraqi POWs exposed the infringement of human rights of foreign nationals by the United States," said the report, released by the press office of China's Cabinet.

The US state department report released Monday accused China's Communist government of persecuting dissidents and religious activists, and said prison inmates were tortured and mistreated.

Washington is likely to again seek censure of China next month at the annual meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. But such condemnations are rare. Beijing has killed by China's allies on the commission.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Liu Jianchao said the State Council report was "an identical to quit the [politics] issue to its sate in its own problems."

"The United States opted for this confrontational approach and China has to make a response," he said. "The United States should take this seriously."

The Chinese report accused the United State of hypocrisy in condemning conditions in foreign nations while staying silent on its own.

"In 2004, the atrocity of US troops abusing Iraqi POWs exposed the dark side of human rights practices of the United States. The scandal shocked the humanity and was condemned by the international community," the report said.

"It is quite ironic that on Jan. 28 of this year, the state department of the United States once again posed as the 'world human rights police,'" it said. AP

Saddam's son was poised to topple dad, says Arnett

LOS ANGELES—The eldest son of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was planning to overthrow his father just as US troops advanced on Baghdad in March 2003, journalist Peter Arnett claimed in Playboy magazine.

Uday Hussein, known for his ruthlessness and thuggish lifestyle, had won the support of the leadership of his father's Republican militia to overthrow Saddam's 35-year rule, according to an advance copy of the April edition of Playboy released by AFP.

The controversial reporter, who was fired by both US television networks in 2003 after suggesting that the US war plan in Iraq had failed, made the claim following an 18-month investigation in which he said he gained access to Uday Hussein's inner circle.

The article cited a letter from Saddam Fedayeen commander Gen. Abid Hamedni, dated March 26, 2003, to which he swore allegiance to a new Iraqi government under the control of Fedayeen chief Uday Hussein.

"According to your directives and continued to have a new government under the leadership of your Excellency (Uday), we have informed all the senior officers of the Saddam Fedayeen of your desire to appoint them as your candidates for office in your government," the letter said.

Uday had Fedayeen re-uniformed his militia of the crumbling reins of power since the same day, he was frustrated when US jets bombed his Rock TV studios in Baghdad, according to Arnett.

The publication says Iraqi women formed a shadow government on the outskirts of Iraq's capital. Baghdad that are disguised under the cover of his personal Olympic committee and headed by murky celebrity, he said.

According to Arnett, the oldest son of the Iraqi dictator had long been duffing under his father's two-third rule and blamed his father for the punishing international sanctions on the country. AFP

Baghdad car bombs kill 5

BAGHDAD—Two car bombs exploded near Iraq's interior ministry in Baghdad on Thursday, killing at least five policemen and wounding seven others in the violence that threatened to overshadow efforts to form a new government.

A police source said the car bombs exploded just outside the heavily guarded ministry in central Baghdad, just as a coalition government is struggling to end the violence of the new government responsible for ruling the next few weeks.

Iraqi politicians are engaged in protracted horse trading to fill top posts in the government, creating a new political landscape that has united enemies over executive positions.

A Shiite alliance won a slim majority in the Jan. 30 polls, gaining power after decades of Sunni domination under Saddam Hussein. The alliance has chosen Ibrahim al-Jaafari as its candidate for prime minister. But Interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is bidding to keep his job.

The Kurds, who came second in the elections, are in a powerful negotiating position and are seen as kingmakers.

The new government will face the daunting task of tightening security against further attacks by rebels in Iraq's new parliament.

Iraqi officials had hoped the elections would help ease violence. But guerrillas have kept up unrest and are bombings in a campaign to topple the US-backed interim government. Reuters

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Bashir draws 2 1/2 years after terrorism trial

BASHIR listening to judges' verdict March 3. AP

JAKARTA—Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, accused of heading an al-Qaeda-linked group blamed for bombings across Asia, was jailed for two-and-a-half years Thursday at the end of his second terrorism trial.

Bashir was cleared of terrorism allegations but was jailed by a five-member panel of judges after being found guilty of "involvement" in a "shadow conspiracy" that led to the 2002 Bali bombings which killed 202 people.

"The panel of judges decided that the defendant, Abu Bakar Bashir, has been legally and constitutionally proven of engaging in a criminal conspiracy that led to fear and the deaths of citizens," Chief Judge Sudarto said.

The judges said that his words to key Bali bomber Amrozi and Rokonio Parangkuangkung a meeting in Solo, Central Java, in 2001 had constituted the conspiracy.

Bashir had told them "I leave it up to you" when he was notified by Amrozi that he and his friends were planning "a program" in Bali.

The verdict was greeted by yells of "Allahu Akbar (God is greatest)" by his followers both inside and outside the court. The judges were immediately whisked out of the room by armed police.

More than 800 police were deployed around the agriculture ministry complex in south Jakarta where the trial was being held. It is the second time the man accused of leading the Jemaah Islamiyah group has faced terrorism charges.

The white-bearded Bashir, 66, looked frail in court dressed in his traditional white robe and shawl, a white skullcap and glasses.

Prosecutors had demanded an eight-year prison sentence for Bashir for failing to prevent Jemaah Islamiyah members from carrying out terror attacks.

The main charge that Bashir and his supporters planned the Bali bombings and the bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta in 2003 had been dropped for lack of evidence.

Prosecutors in their indictment said that as Jemaah Islamiyah chief, Bashir visited one of its training camps in the Philippines in 2000 and allegedly ordered "killing those Christian like Ambon which committed attacks and killing of Americans and their allies."

Indonesia has come under pressure from the United States and Australia to act against Bashir, and the trial has heard evidence that Indonesia was asked to hand him over to the US authorities.

Shortly before Thursday's court session, Bashir said that if he was found guilty it would be a "tyrannical verdict," but he appealed to his followers not to react with violence if he was convicted.

"If Allah decides to free me, then we should not be overly happy but if Allah decides that I remain in detention, if the judges do not free me, we should also not react excessively," Bashir said.

Bashir maintained that US President George W. Bush, "the enemy of Allah," has pressured Indonesia to jail him to stop him campaigning for Islamic law.

Inside the militantly secured 500 Bashir supporters packed the public gallery. Around 400 Bashir supporters and dozens of members of the Laskhar Pembela Islam militant group gathered outside the court.

Bashir was arrested a week after the October 2002 Bali bombings and was first put on trial the following year.

Prosecutors failed to prove that he waged a terror campaign to topple the government and led Jemaah Islamiyah, which is considered to be setting up a pan-Islamic state across Southeast Asia.

However judges found him guilty of immigration offences and he was jailed.

Police rearrested him in April last year on his 66th prison after serving the immigration sentence, citing new evidence of terrorist links and of his Jemaah Islamiyah leadership. AFP

Pope could live for years with rest, doctors say

ROME—Pope John Paul would live for a few more years as long as he takes time to recover from his latest health scare and cuts back on future commitments, medical experts said on Wednesday.

The 84-year-old Pope and his doctors face potentially difficult decisions in the three-and-a-half weeks ahead following throat surgery last Thursday to help the Pontiff breathe, but there is no reason why he should not regain much of his former strength.

"If he is allowed to rest and recuperate, then what reason is there for him to die at this moment? None," said Prof. Lionel Penault, director of the Italian Parkinson's Association.

"The Pope is a patient who could still live for some years, albeit always growing slightly weaker," he said.

The Pope, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, was rushed to hospital twice last month with acute breathing problems, leaving doctors to perform a tracheotomy—inserting a tube into his windpipe to clear the body tract for lungs.

Excessive fat might develop (potentially deadly pneumonia have subsided and the physicians say it is making a good recovery, regaining the use of his voice and eating regularly.

The two immediate questions facing his medical team are when to remove the tracheotomy tube and when to let him return home.

Prof. Roberto Filipo, ancient nose and throat specialist at Rome's Sapienza University, thought his doctors would be eager to take out the tube as soon as possible.

"The tracheotomy tube provides short-term relief, but can cause complications over a longer period because it heightens the risk of infections," he said.

However, other specialists said leaving the tube in place for a few more weeks would allow doctors to keep the lungs clean and give them temporary access should his breathing fail again.

Parkinson's patients suffer from weakened muscles which means it is hard to cough, and therefore hard for them to clear mucous from their lungs, and hard to swallow, which means food can fall into the windpipe and infect the lungs.

"If he were my patient, I would leave it in," said Doctor Semion Rosenpolin, pulmonary critical care specialist at Long Island Care Centre in the United States. Reuters

Cholesterol drug Crestor could pose risks for Asians

WASHINGTON—The cholesterol drug Crestor is being considered to add a caution that many doses should be reduced in Asian-Americans and some other patients.

The Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday that Crestor, like other drugs in the category known as statins, can have a rare side effect of serious muscle damage.

A clinical trial found that levels of Crestor in Asian patients were double those of Caucasians taking the same dose, increasing the chance of muscle damage.

The new label urges physicians to start Asian patients, those with severe kidney disease and patients taking cyclosporine at the lowest dose level.

The lowest available dose would be 5 mg, compared with a recommended dose of 40 mg.

The cholesterol-lowering drug has been prescribed to more than 4.7 million patients, according to manufacturer AstraZeneca.

"We continue to believe Crestor is safe and effective when used according to the prescribing information," said David Brennan, AstraZeneca president.

Dr. Steven Galson, acting director of the FDA's Centre for Drug Evaluation and Research, said the "advisory on Crestor is part of an ongoing effort to notify the public of potentially significant emerging safety data so that they can make more informed choices about their medical care."

Crestor has drawn some criticism for the reported muscle damage, but the FDA statement said a review of available data indicates the risk from Crestor is no higher than that from other statin drugs. AP

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OPINION

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In harm's way

MALAYSIA: Home Minister Azmi Khalid has said: "Compared to Guantanamo Bay we are a five-star hotel. We do not do things that are inhumane. This is our guarantee."

He was referring to the massive crackdown recently launched by the Malaysian government against illegal foreign workers. While the raids have mostly been aimed against Indonesian workers, more than 200 Filipinos have also been rounded up.

EDITORIAL

The crackdown, coming after a well-publicized four-month amnesty period, would be less controversial if it didn't involve punishment during to the British colonial period: caning. It is punishment by caning, in particular, that has sparked an international outcry against the Malaysian government. The concern felt by international human rights groups has been echoed by foreign governments.

Indonesia and the Philippines, in particular, have had diplomatic tussles with Malaysia over the subject of workers' migration. Malaysia's crackdown in Sabah, in particular, threatened to revive decades-old animosities between Manila and Kuala Lumpur over that contested territory. Jakarta, too, has had repeated high-level ministerial meetings with its counterparts in Malaysia to discuss this difficult issue.

The truth is, Malaysia needs foreign workers badly as many Malaysians refuse to take on low-paying jobs. Neighboring countries, from the Philippines and Indonesia to Burma and Bangladesh and even India, have millions of unemployed workers willing to do those jobs.

The Malaysian government, however, has a long-standing policy of stringently applying its laws. It never hesitates to apply its police power to the fullest. As Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak said, illegal workers who remained in Malaysia have had their last chance. "We do not need to lose pity, it doesn't matter anymore. They chose to remain defiant, they have to face the music."

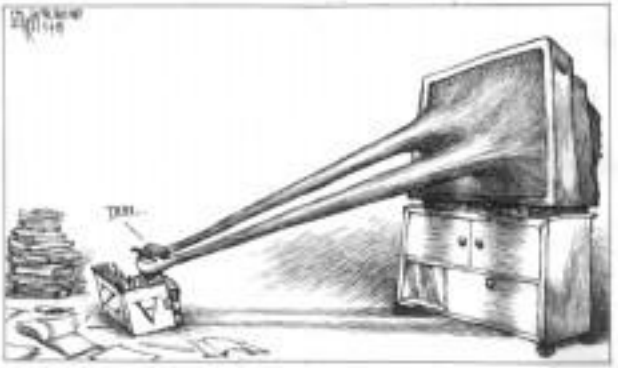
The Malaysian government can argue that it has postponed the recent round of expulsions four times, and that it has every right to impose what it calls its revolving door policy: limited contractual periods for workers who must return to their countries of origin in between stints. For workers from places like Indonesia and the Philippines, expulsion, while harsh, probably doesn't mean death. For workers from Burma, however, there is the chance that workers sent back may face harsh punishment from their own government.

The strength of the Malaysian position is that for every illegal worker expelled, there are probably dozens, if not hundreds willing to take their place, according to the strict regulations imposed by Malaysian authorities. The fear that the countries of aggrieved illegal workers can do, is what they are now doing: call on the Malaysian government to treat illegal workers humanely.

Since the retirement of the feisty former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia has shown itself far more willing to dialogue with its neighbors. It has been responding reasonably to foreign criticisms. However, old habits die hard, and there is an older habit than the relish with which Malaysian officials wield their police powers.

Aside from Singapore, no other Asean country condones caning as an acceptable form of punishment. This indicates that Asean can push for a consensus when it comes to the treatment of foreign nationals. Under no circumstances can caning be deemed acceptable for citizens of nations that themselves reject caning as a punishment for their own citizens. The least Malaysia can do is to give way in this regard.

The Philippine government, on the other hand, has to cooperate with Malaysia in pushing migrants so that Filipinos bound for Malaysia do so with legitimate work permits and papers. Opportunities remain in that country, and no earthly power can stop desperate Filipinos from seeking employment there. What the country has an obligation to do is to ensure that no Filipino puts himself in harm's way. Failure to do so ensures, in the end, that what is a Malaysian problem becomes a Philippine problem.



It's fall, spring and summer in RP all at once

IT is early spring in the temperate region, but in tropical Philippines it is spring, summer and fall all at the same time, as you've learned for that?

Look around you. The big, broad, rounded, shiny leaves of the rubber trees are turning yellow, orange, red, purple and rust, then fall off like snow. As it accumulates, forms carpet-layers, it is big and broad, also turn red, but the tree doesn't shed all its leaves like the rubber. On the other hand, the deciduously sheds all its leaves, leaving the ground below with leaves. Leaves that are brown, dusty to the touch. Yet a few months, the mahogany trees also drop their leaves. Afterwards, the trees all stand naked until their have branches pointing to the sky, exposing the birds' nests and the nests of the big and ants called Balanti in the higher branches, as though it is autumn.

After several days, the bare branches and twigs will burst with tiny buds as trees do in spring. Those of the mahogany are purplish-brown, all the others are light green, the color leaves appear, they seem, wearing merely in the wind like the leaves of the bamboo, except a light green tinge and, as the days wear on, progressively turn darker green. The tamarind trees also unfurl light green leaves that turn bigger but remarkable, just like the balimbin who gather the leaves for soup, and also the kamias. And in May and June, the light green color is dotted with black dashes. They are called Juan bugs, though they are not really bugs but beetles.

Often you will see trees sounding side by side during all these at the same time. One tree would have all its leaves intact while beside is another trees shedding leaves. Still another would be fully bare, with the dead leaves surrounding the ground around it, while a fourth would be spouting buds and a fifth beside new sprouts on a light green color.

Next time you pass Quezon Avenue in Quezon City, take the opportunity to watch nature changing seasons as the mahogany trees, often in a row beside the street, shedding, sprouting and growing leaves at the same time beside one another, as though they cannot decide whether it's fall, winter or spring.

At the same time, some trees, shrubs and vines have cast aside blossoms ahead of the others. The first in bloom is the fairly leafless, which is already in full bloom with profuse pink blossoms that rival the more famous cherry blossoms of Japan. Some are one has found homes/trees that adorn fences, hedges and trees with their red, orange, purple and white flowers, single-petaled or multi-petaled, signaling that summer is really here, what with the heat beginning to soar and thirty-Week-only examples of weeks away.

The kalachuchi hangs one not only red, pink, yellow and white blossoms, but also spreads its perfume in the air. Walk under a kalachuchi tree and you can smell its fragrant breath.

Soon, as the heat of summer reaches its peak, it will be the turn of the ixora. Not only the orange ixora as red orange blossoms gracing its wide spreading crown on fire. Those passing through Quezon City especially in and around the Diliman campus of the University of the Philippines, and the ones nearby parks, Quezon Memorial and the Ninoy Aquino Park, will soon see this and less cultivated show.

If you happen to drive by Laguna Lake on the flood side, look out for an island on fire in the middle of the lake. This is Golden Island, the first inhabited of the Lake Isle, and Mrs. Juan Bulos who owned it. The couple planted many fire trees on it and in summer, when they bloom, the island is a red spot, looking even from afar as though it is on fire.

In the last two columns, I argued that instead of cutting downroad breaks, we should preserve them for tourists as other countries like America, Canada and Japan do.

Besides ago, the New England-born planner devised new trees into their hills and mountains and farms. The history of these trees into America rise of colors before falling in autumn. Now these trees attract hordes of tourists every summer who tramp all over the New England states just to gawk at the beautiful foliage and leave a lot of money in the hotels, restaurants, souvenir stores, gift shops, resorts and their employees.

Since we can't have many trees with leaves that turn into many colors in autumn, when it we plant trees that bear colorful blossoms instead or dreaded recessions? After several years, they would be native attractions, and instead of foliage tours, we would have our own flower tours.

The trouble with our present reforestation efforts is that we plant fast-trees like mango and bayog and Gumhrood trees with high-priced timber like narra and mahogany like they don't grow to harvestable size until 20 years or more, for 25 years or more, the tree farmer has no income from his trees. So why don't we instead plant trees like the ixora trees that grow faster and can be harvested earlier and at the same time feast colorful blossoms? The leguminous trees, like acacia, fire tree, plant (pili-pili) and kakawate are fast-growing softwood that can be harvested after five years. They are good enough for woodwork, furniture, charcoal and firewood. The farmer, therefore, will have a steady income while waiting for the high-priced hardwoods to mature. What's more, their leaves can rich in nitrogen and make good fertilizer, and they are self-propagating.

Imagine if we had whole mountainsides and hills full of blooming kamuyuni and fire trees. Won't they attract eco-tourists?

Suffer the children

FOR more than a year already, several bright students from the UP College of Law have spent hours on internships as help students in legal battles over child custody cases. Most of the paper mainly from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Manila and as part of their Child's Rights clinical course, these students have visited jails in Quezon City, Pasig, Malabon and Navotas. They have appeared in court and consulted with their parents, the heads of barangay (village) councils and the heads of social welfare units together with adult offenders (the law requires separate quarters or otherwise hold in quarantine). They have assisted child victims of rape and sexual molestation.

This semester, in the course of students, running of the Clinic of 2005 E, are presenting a photo exhibit of the work of Nana Bautista, who captured compelling shots of the conditions of what students calls "children in conflict with the law" or CICLs. The photos at the Malcolm Hall lobby promote the showing of "Bunso," a documentary about three boys detained in an adult prison in the Visayas, and filmed by Dina Carolino and Ian Rosario.

I have attended some past internship seminars and found the students' reports and discussions Francisco Bautista, a third year law student, described conditions in the Malabon jail: "Conditions are squalid ... ventilation inadequate ... the bare minimum. Doctors visit for 30 minutes ... the detainees had to spend all day and night in cells with their legs folded. There was literally not even enough room for detainees to stretch their legs." (It is worse in Quezon City, whose jail was built for 700 but holds 3,000.)

Dyna Dandan, Ateneo prep, reported: Based on interviews, there was a separate cell customarily for minors, but wasn't got out once a day, and was allowed a daily bath (though he had to pass through the adult offenders' cell to get to the dormitory), but he had never changed his same clothes he had been for the time he was arrested, and had not been visited by anyone since. He slept usually under a tent, spent time on himself and became the dominant group among the bunk beds.

Realizing, too, that the kids got to breathe fresh air only during "conferences" with "counsels," the law students arranged their school sites to "enable" more often with their wards. The students would every bring food, toiletries and allergy medicines, which they paid with their own funds.

It was also so refreshing to read a female student's write—about the hopeless and growing plight of conscientious objectors. After the incident she was visiting a jail, "I kept wishing that I had worn sneakers instead of heels."

The students have a high learning coverage in getting their "wards" released, but also significant's we just witnessing these offenders back to their lives. Senegalese is granted, like child, a right unlike would have to return to his community and I am afraid that ... he might be influenced by his peers to use illegal drugs. He has only finished Grade 4 but ... desires to study again and finish high school."

It is an uphill battle to get the offenders released. (A Las Piñas circle of court forward a manner ordinance, saying that life is different from what they learned in their books, and that they shouldn't always insist on what the law provides.) Understandably, judges are hesitant to release the minors, fearing no doubt were the record of repeat offenders and lack of information on their family. Fortunately, the students have asked that the minors be referred to an NGO, Bagong Buwan's Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation Inc. (Peadi), which provides shelters for those youthful offenders.

The volunteers are supervised by a coach led by long-time professor of Persons and Family Relations Elizabeth A. Aguiling-Pangalangan, and includes UP Office of Legal Aid Director Theresa Dacuy-Mendoza, retired Family Court Judge Lilia Lopez, and Jose Ambrosio Maramba, a private prosecutor in the famous Ruiz-Takeshi rape case.

Dandan's record has report by recognizing the "own enormity and finiteness of one's responsibilities"—sincerious. Because these youthful offenders have no one else to turn to, and Bulos, because their problems stem from poverty, a problem that a few student lawyers is helpless to fix.

Other law students have served as volunteers with Sen. Joker Salonga's Bantay Kinatawan, or as interns in environmental groups, human rights law, indigenous peoples' rights, and humanitarian from the UP Office of Legal Aid, an DPW Desk to assist migrant workers. (When are often threatened to lend to ease and investment scams, yet are otherwise tangling for legal aid, which are accessible only to the poor. Hence, UP's Sandiganbayan lead the house of the social cases of migrant labor, and need help with family law questions.

I have told the student volunteers that particular days are the first mental people the youthful offenders have encountered in a long while. More than serving as the children's "lawyers," they can actually serve as role models and mentors to traumatized youth. The volunteers have not shirked the challenges, despite the jarring inconvenience to bureaucratic inefficiency in the courts, and indeed, many of them have told me they wish to pursue their children's rights advocacy after they become lawyers.

When we speak of the "duty to be a saint ... they doesn't mean doing strange things. It means doing the struggle in the manner life and be heroically fulfilling your duty right through the end."

Comments to ted.pangalangan@up.edu.ph

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

Implications of Senate shortcut on budget bill

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE SENATE approval on Monday of the 2005 budget bill marked a breakthrough in the congressional budget log that had formed up the bill since last August and forced a source of the 2005 budget to perform a paralysis of government operations. The issue that exercised liberals is what is behind the Senate's move to shortcut the budget debate has revealed the information that the big minority party barred was at the root of the Senate's concentration.

The opposition is by distracted by the finger-pointing between the Senate and the House. When it spurs diplomats at its point out the implications of the Senate's moves.

The first implication is that the Senate's adoption of the administration-sponsored bill marked passed by the House on about the legislative process with the bypassing of the arduous and time-consuming final process, the bicameral conference, which would have held the budget bill between the House and the Senate. Under the two chambers over the pork barrel and between the executive and the legislature over the passage of the administration's program for measures, pinpointing the responsibility for the budget deficit.

As Sen. Adriano Defensor-Santiago, who while being a member of the Senate majority cannot be considered a blind follower of the administration, has incisively pointed out, the bicameral conference, where pork is so knockable, the House and the executive of the bill, would have given the House members a last-ditch opportunity to restore the cuts in their pork barrel allocations.

On the P1.126 trillion budget bill approved by the Senate by a 20-4 vote, the pork-barrel allocations of senators has been increased to P1.08 billion each, down from P200 billion, and that of House members, to P80 million from P50 million. With the bypassing of the bicameral conference, the signing of the bill into law by the President has been speeded up.

The second implication is that the short-cuts made by the Senate, through a coup engineered by Sen. Manuel Villar, chair of the Senate Finance committee, removed the bill as the main obstacle to the legislative agenda and thereby the way for the passage of the key measures to bridge gaps in the fiscal deficit and debt. The more initiated by Villar to bypass the bicameral committee was vintage Villar, who became famous for springing the votes on the House to impeach Supreme Court Justice Joseph Jarencio and moved to the Senate the impeachment charges had against him.

Whether or not the senators were playing footsies in the opposition with the executive, the purpose has to due many senators, including opposition members, have expressed concern over the prolongation of the Senate's inner underscore and the uncertainties it created regarding the prospects of reducing the deficit and the recovery of the economy, given the slow pace of the deliberations on the six-inch bill. These measures have been languishing in Congress since July when President Macapagal-Arroyo began her regular term.

Support for the Senate shortcut unexpectedly came from Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who said: "The people are entitled to some stability in their financial operations for the government for the no longer has to be granted the final position and budgetary needs. He must show our people we are a responsible Congress."

The shortcut was criticized by fellow opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara who described the Senate vote as "an act of statesmanship" for the country's stability and Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. who said the senators had behaved so out that "we are committed to an act of irresponsible."

Pimentel added: "This is the first priority legislation that we need to pass over and above all the tax measures that the President is now pushing that chamber to enact. This is an outrageous act of the chamber in response to various threat and blackmail measures."

Their views expressed the concerns shared by the Senate majority. Senate President Franklin Drilon said the Senate "feels that the economy is in a precarious state" and "any failure to pass new budget is not doing the country any good," adding that the "budget is the financial roadmap of the country and a continued budget does not augur well for the country."

It isn't for naught that there is now evidence that the opposition members knuckled under pressure from the President who only a few days ago uttered dangerous over the long delay in passing the budget bill.

The breakthrough in Congress was the signal being received by multinational investors and credit rating institutions to demonstrate the administration's capacity to get its legislative agenda moving and thereby to counter the exaggeration of the political opposition. During the past few months, international agencies have downgraded the country's credit ratings, citing the paralysis of the administration in acting on key tax legislation measures. In the end-August, The Intelligence Unit particular investors in foreign investors because, this, is the most important fiscal legislation, entered, is consume provisions of incoming the cost-cutting being done through the reduction of key pork barrel allocations, and third, to passage reflects the administration's political will and capacity to push politically unpopular legislation.

Although the shot in the pork-barrel allocations has not escaped deep enough, their appearance of a response to strike signals from international financial and ratings institutions which have been searching for signs that the administration was complementing its tax measures with austerity measures.

School cults

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

WE usually think of our schools as safe havens for our children, a neutral, better ethnic that's trying to replace the street-level code model, and to free and more with others.

What happens though when the schools become a breeding ground for cults, where the teachers themselves become cult leaders?

That's what seems to have happened to the ICF School in Cagayan de Oro, the latest standing for Jesus Christ Followers. Last Jan. 26, the school had to be closed down after its officials refused to release a 15-year-old student who had left home after a quarrel with parents and sought refuge in the school.

There were three instances where the police had to break in. A human article last Sunday by the lawyers J. B. Rivera said the *ICF* members fought police "wielding steel pipes, sticks, tasks and human sacrifices wrapped in plastic." Three policemen were injured in the fracas and 22 *ICF* members were arrested, including several who were also injured, were arrested and brought to the Limbo Detention and Rehabilitation Center.

Court hearings have secured two elements. I caught one newsman and marched with horses as the students insulted, threatened and ranted police and government officials while in action to resist investigations, refusing to go home with their parents and insisting on being with their teacher leaders.

High academic standards

It turns out that the January incident was only the latest in a series of encounters between the school and government officials.

The school was established in 1999 by brothers and Dindo Tiongco, both of whom had worked in the Middle East. The school's temporary permit expired two years ago and the Department of Education recommended that the school be closed down because it was using even its daily 20-hour days in English. The city council stood up the recommendation, passing a resolution to close down the school, but it was never implemented.

How different is the school's curriculum? Similarly Tiongco, in a television interview using a particularly contrived British accent claimed that his former teachers, and that they were Sir, naming the "British system." There are no Filipino subjects—the three are considered irrelevant. Teachers and students are English, or at least Tiongco prefers the British-Colonial accent. His passing mark in *ICF* school is 90, much higher than the DepEd's current cut-off of 75, but Tiongco said that they intended to decrease the passing mark to 85, and then to 80.

So not to any Tiongco and her teachers above their high academic standards that they have now refused the help of public lawyers. They insist that six of their students will be able to defend them in court.

True believers

The *ICF* controversy reminds us that schools are potential indoctrination grounds for cults, sects or just fads for teachers and students alike taking on the role of cult leaders.

Teachers are often driven by personal ideals and beliefs, artistic in itself is a good thing. The danger though is that these ideals can turn into the imposition of ideas of conformity and demand for time and mind.

The students are vulnerable for many reasons. First, they are easily spent more time in schools than at home, a multimedia captive audience for would be cult leaders. It's not just their parents who are absent. Even when present, parents are quite frequent (both trips and outings, it's during these times when students become too dependent on and trusting of their teachers.

I'd be very suspicious, too, about students who frequently get their assignments being out at their home, or inside the living things together, with sleeping, eating, cooking or watching movies. If you don't end up with cults like this *ICF* school, there's a strong chance you're going to have sexual seduction and harassment. The worst case scenario is a cult where the teacher leader sexually exploits the students followers.

It cannot be overstated how vulnerable the students to teachers in that the young see their teachers as all-knowing, and as authority figures. Sure, young people today are edgy, discerning, even cynical, but I'm usually more worried about the bright ones because they're the ones who may eventually be drawn to the teachers' charisma and by their teachers' seeming persuasiveness, or by their theories.

Dear cult leads have more following, they never set as researcher between, followers who will never question their leaders. Any criticism is dismissed as coming from the ignorant. The leaders are quite destructive as the source of all good. "Outsiders" are to be avoided, even if they are family.

Before true, cult leaders down self-knowledge by painting themselves as being misunderstood, as being persecuted by the outside world. A siege mentality is created, with leaders constantly exhorting followers to be absolutely loyal and steadfast and to fight the outsiders (the enemy).

Social isolation

The *ICF* controversy reminds us even more just precisely of social communities. Cagayan de Oro is a fairly cosmopolitan area, with very good schools like Xavier University. Yet, there was space for something like the *ICF* School to emerge.

ICF is, of course, an extreme example of schools ruined rules, but to me the bottom was the schools that are more subtle in the way they indoctrinate students. I cringe to hear we call our campuses schools "seminars" without thinking that there's any of the seminary's purpose. Some schools are founded and run by religious, businesses of other faiths, of other political beliefs, of other lifestyles, but no place in modern education.

Recognize, too, how some of the ideas symptoms of deeper and more serious problems. Some of the cult-like social isolation—families, faith-based groups—provide inadequate social support.

Our fellowship groups are the antidotes of the times. Listening to Tiongco as well as her fellow teachers, with their "British" accents, I thought of the Filipino lower senior socially classes of yesteryear's days of the colonial era, when they were proud of their ability to speak English with an American accent. They viewed preaching about salvation in heaven and eternal damnation in hell. They viewed was that life now, in a Filipino in the Philippines, a hell well, unclean that only one is to receive a "British system" in school in order to avoid eventually such salvation in a somewhat utopia.

"We will never have a country upside down," Rizalista Tiongco was quoted in her Sunday's headline. *ICF* school establishes the idea, but we have much our ideas all the birds miss running out there, in and out of schools. Cults make to us comfortable because, even as we thanks out loudly over the blessings of their leaders, we realize that deep we are proud sorry of our own social limitations and that the values they speak of are those that we cherish and uphold.

Treasures of Sta. Cruz Church

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

ONE of these days, I have to take several photos you inside Ed Santiago in his modern Paco home to get a glimpse into my life two decades ago when we were both working for the now-defunct Philippines Daily Inquirer. He was a painter, like Manuel Conteapo, the photographer I would always ask for because he was genuinely interested in the historical materials that ended up as illustrations for my magazine articles.

Ed was also a collector, living those black and white photographs recently, I realized that what never was seen as ephemera—for example, reproducing artifacts, pieces in and documents from the historical Library, the National Archives or the Lopez Memorial Museum—were the ones I enjoyed most at work. Now I can see nostalgia over the best results.

One photograph has me peering out from the espresso window in the Emilio Aguinaldo mansion, now Aguinaldo Center. Modern trees now allowed one to see the mansion in its entirety. Gone are the numerous street passageways and jeep trains that dot the house. But even if I could push my weight around and insist on doing it again, I don't have the energy to climb the steep steps all the way to Aguinaldo's office. I don't even think I can successfully frame well fit into the pigeon-hole I see in photographs.

Another photograph shows me on my knees in the door of Sta. Cruz Church in Manila. Despite the cultural treasures it contains, the area is not to be visited (pointless) I was not playing or posing for my son. Curious about an ancient granite slab there, I had posed whatever in a sacristan robbing it with old newspaper. It turned out to be a tombstone of Don Juan Salcedo, grandson of Juan de Salcedo who founded the city of Manila in 1571 at the age of 62. A photograph of the same tombstone is in the recently published book "Santa Cruz Church: A Living Heritage," by Anna Maria L. Harper who succeeded my earlier attempt to write about the church.

The book isn't in the bookstores yet. You can order it directly from the author at 0917-8000-000 or e-mail her at annamaria@yahoo.com. The book is a beautiful production, with photographs by Ed Lee and Ramon Orlina, and is a must-have for anyone interested in the history of Manila. Harper's book is the result of years of research in archives and libraries, and she has also interviewed many people who have a connection with the church. Her book is a labor of love, and it shows.

Benefits of a national ID

IT is high time that our country implement the national ID system. However, please do away with the plans to have it as a Smart Card complete with thumb mark and digitized signature as this will drive up the cost of implementation. Besides, how are mother's babies and young children going to be registered when the thumb mark and digitized signature will have to be updated as they grow up? The problem with our country is that we always want to fly even before we can walk.

In Taiwan, the card is just a simple card with a person's name, address, ID number, photo, the names of his/her parents and spouse. The photo is updated as a person grows up, a mere minimum background on the person is present in the hospital registry. Registration of a newly-born child and updates are done in the local municipality.

The reason why we do not have a national ID system is that the United States does not have one. Our legislators like to ape American laws. However, the United States has a very efficient driver's license system, which is a very good substitute for a national ID.

There are economic benefits that we can derive from a national ID system. Imagine an economically challenged individual who can get a midget loan from the bank in order to study. Or a small business proponent getting that much needed capital. Any loan defaulting individual will automatically be listed in a database. This should put pressure on loan sharks to "do good" with the money and make proper repayments. More importantly, we can do away with the yearly "useless" cedula. The money meant for it can be reallocated to maintaining the national ID system.

We can also apply a "domestic opportunity to learn the lessons of the past and appreciate the freedom that others fought and died for.

Please continue to write about the liberation of the Philippines.

—NANCY CRAMER HEITE,
South Hadley, Pennsylvania, USA

All but a forgotten battle

I did the 4th year old daughter of a deceased American veteran of the Battle for Manila. I was fascinated with the lack of attention given to the 60th anniversary of the battle. Japa fully here in the United States. Only a 20-minute documentary was shown on Feb. 16 in the History Channel.)

This battle seems to have been completely forgotten. The suffering and sacrifices of the Americans and the Filipino people do need to be made known so that the younger generations will have an appreciation of the price of freedom.

—GRACIA C. BURNHAM,
Dasmariñas, Cavite

LETTERS

Misleading statistics

I NEED to comment with known columnist Neal R. Cruz, in particular his Feb. 7 commentary on "... widening the public with statistics."

I believe that besides graft and corruption, another problem hindering our country today is mediocrity. I think only around 10 percent of our government officials are credible. I also found on my own experience with government transactions and many people can attest to this.

Nobody I know our government officials and employees impresses. They seem to have forgotten that "a public office is a public trust."

I also believe that one of the major causes of low public confidence in our government officials is politics. Politics is a game. I believe that what we need today is moral leadership by statesmen.

—HERMENEGILDA BAUTISTA,
municipal councilman,
Municipality of Pamplona,
Province of Pangasinan

Misdirected and unnecessary concerns

ISSAIAH 58 de los Reyes, in his letter, tries to normalize and scare media by hinting that I could end up getting murdered for defending President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (PDI, 2/2/05). My email is a public document. However, I am "What should' bother Dr. los Reyes is if any lawyer swears or unsubscribes practices. I can assure him it is possible as my to defend a client zealously within the rules.

The increasingly-annoying-to-hear notion of some people about how much President Erap pays his lawyers tainted up again in his letter, is that his counsel is "a need" handy-useless my own losing wife, evidence, solicitors, or at. But, if he trusts Jesus, my earnings all my life have not enabled me to have a home I can call my own or even use a car newer than my 9-year-old edition.

I do spend on pro bono cases and causes, a lifelong addiction, like Carlos Celdran's lifelong addiction to Carlos Macapagal-Arroyo-bashing but my earnings from my years of daily bread. That is enough for me. All my life he has come up with what I need for the day. Maybe, at my age, I should ask for a two-day supply!

Presidente Estrada, I reminisced in power, beginning when he pushed for having Bonifacio Monroy remains at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Out of power, the wandering ended not to help. If somebody needs assistance to death by lethal injection and that someone seeks my help, I will not make it easy for that somebody to overcome the commandment prohibiting murder. Insurance is my philosophically opposed to the death penalty.

It would be impractical for me to assault Dr. los Reyes, on whether I take on a case or not. But, since if Madam Theresa did get me, I would have remained undivided. If, if we would have insurgency we should take a stand on Uncle Jovy Salonga's judgment that from Day One Mr. Carlos Macapagal-Arroyo has not had any use for the rule of law.

I have had critics who say they found themselves in trouble, and resisted the meaning of shame, and came to see the help. I hope Dr. los Reyes or anyone for issues does not get into trouble with the law, but should it happen, and no-fill-wonders found would emerge, and he would think I could help, pro bono or not, let's talk. Love has a message about "bad" people. Meanwhile, should my prayers be used with rubber scriptures or loss of time, indeed did it it?

—E.J.V. SALVIDAR,
4903 Bigasan St.,
Poblacion, Makati City

DOE must prove claims

THANK you for accommodating my letter clarifying Abigail Ito's report, titled "Virginia Energy power bids deferred," (PDI, 2/16/05).

We take note of Ito's reply to our letter saying that she is standing by her words, which, according to her, "have been one of the most reliable all three months that she has been in the energy beat." We do not mean to question the judgment of Ito on the credibility of her sources; much less, doubt the integrity of the Department of Energy officials who provided such information to anyone.

We remain, however, undersigned the matter of her source for not identifying himself. The statements he issued, as we have explained in our letter to your newspaper, could be misunderstood by the electric power industry stakeholders and non-Filipino civil consultants. Moreover, it could create more confidence in the Philippine government to underwrite the risks in investments for the electricity business in the country.

Anyway, we respect the decision of Ito not to reveal the identity of her informant. But we would like to reiterate that we never recommended the deferment of the Virginia Energy power interconnection for three years or, for that matter, listed contenders for the project.

The Garden of pond now has on the DOE official who claims to be privy to the deferment of the Virginia project has large line, as a responsible energy official, to bring forth a copy of the documents that will substantiate his statements.

—ROMULO L. NERI, JR.,
chair and chief executive officer,
Energy Regulatory Commission,
The ERC Center Bldg.,
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

Signature not disowned

NERIL R. Cruz stated (PDI, 2/25/05) why Comelec Commissioner Rufino Javier was included in the initial complaint lodged with the Ombudsman in connection with the questionable award given by the Commission on Elections to Mega Pacific Consortium.

Indeed, in this award, it is the signature of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos that appears over the printed name of Rufino S.B. Javier, with an "OK" notation thereon, which should merely indicate that when the commission approved the award on April 26, 2005, Javier was not present on account of an "official business" to which he must have been then engaged.

Clearly, however, Abalos signed for Javier in no time after April 25, 2005 did Javier ever disown the misappropriation of that signature. In law, failure of the principal to disown an act as to which a "representative agreement" on his behalf amounts to adoption or acceptance of the act of the representative.

But more important, the acts of Javier in relation to this award would positively indicate that he was actively in league in the formulation of the questioned grant. As early as Oct. 30, 2003—or near by six months before the bidding and the grant of the award—he, with some Comelec commissioners and the top officers of Mega Pacific, together flew to Seoul, South Korea to visit SK C and C Ltd. (Mega Pacific's manufacturer of the "voting-counting" machines to be procured). These facts are all fully documented.

—EMILIO C. CAPULONG, JR.,
Emmy Kasamangan,
Ribobotani House,
7 First St., Araneta Lane,
Mandaluyong City

US wars on world's patrimony

THE US ambassador's comments on Philippine-Iraq relationships, as quoted in the Inquirer's Feb. 4 editorial have been duly noted.

Is it not distressing that whenever the United States engages in foreign hostilities, it is usually accompanied by severe damage to the world's cultural patrimony?

When American forces liberated Manila, it was supposed that excessive bombing would take place to complete the occupying Japanese forces.

But once the city was taken, was it not unfortunate that an American quasi-nonsensical colonel would carry on the destruction of museums, especially by sacking century-old banks and churches just to convert this historic heart of the city into an administrative center as area?

Besides, the cultural capital of Europe (and even of Germany) and hardly a military target, was flattened. A tragic loss for Europe. And more than 35,000 civilians were sacrificed in the process of Hitler, a miserable disaster, whose days were counted.

During the Vietnam war, bombs were dropped by the American air force on the imperial city of Hue and on old palaces.

The huge and recent damage to Iraq, as the world patrimony, in a poorly planned occupation—a presumptive war based on manufactured and false information, is even more distressing.

The United States was able to learn of the importance of the Baghdad Museum, restored it closer to prewar days of its existence.

University libraries with unique historical books, primitive manuscripts, were lost forever. Iraqi archaeological sites all over the country are being devastated due to the collapse of administration and looters. Should the United States not bear full responsibility for such irreparable depredations?

History will weigh the advantage of disposing of a cruel individual (which would have been done in the first Iraq war) against the enormous damage being inflicted on the cradle of humanity. Such misdeeds are not over, as shown by the recent destruction of the town of Fallujah. Invading a town to get rid of insurgents is absurd, they just fade away and reappear somewhere else. It is like fancying anyone to a hammer.

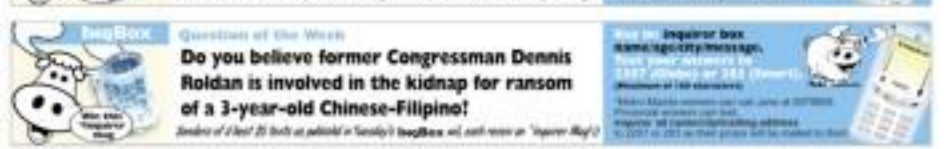
Relics of antique houses of mosques serve as testimony to an outrageous military decision and occupation.

We certainly enjoy books or films showing cowboys in their entertainment. But is it asking too much of historics, when it wages a war abroad, as simple educated people in places of responsibility, and not let the government dominate concerning foreign countries if they do not have the slightest knowledge of the historical past of the places they have the power to wipe out?

Is the idea of target bombing from planes flying at 10,000 feet—"in order to save lives"—not a manifestation of senseless and, therefore, should-be banned? In my view it is as despicable as terrorism; applying it abroad on a presumptive war) makes it even worse.

How we progressed at all from the Middle Ages when people who held "unconventional" views were burned at the stake!

—PAUL WALLACE OF SYRACUSE,
105 Rustan Building
cor. Ayala and Escoda, Manila



Across the NATION

Kidnappers free agriculture exec

GUIMARAS CITY—The agriculture official who was kidnapped in Lanuza del Sur on Valentine's Day was freed without ransom at dawn yesterday, agriculture officials in the Iloilo-Guimaras Region in Western Mindanao said.

Manolo Arce Llanza, Department of Agriculture and Rodolfo Mikhail undersecretary said Regional Executive Director Ed Gerald Catalla, in-charge of the region's management office, was freed at 4 a.m. yesterday in the municipality of Lanuza del Norte.

"He arrived tonight but he was only briefly tired," Llanza said.

Llanza said the victim was freed without ransom but admitted his office had shelled out some amount as "incidentals for food" for those who worked for Gremela's release.

Earlier, the abductors who the military described as "neophytes" demanded P300,000 ransom in exchange for Gremela's freedom.

"We used a diplomatic approach in securing his release," Llanza said. "The testimony managed to convince the suspects to free Gremela because he came here to help our farmers become productive."

Gremela, 48, a native of Manila, was in Lanuza del Sur on official mission, its said another DAF-ARMM provincial official were on their way to Bilanzal City from Mahaburg, Lanao del Sur, when ordered by three gunmen in Tagum.

The military earlier theorized that the kidnapping had something to do with "land disputes" in the area of 3,643 ARMM, said that the abduction was carried out by disgruntled employees of the agriculture provincial office.

Ric Pagatpat, DAF-ARMM regional undersecretary for field operations, said the abductors

Group condemns arrest of 4 women activists

LUCENA CITY—The militant women's group Gabriela and the Gabriela Women's Party have condemned the illegal arrest of their four leaders and coordinators in Quezon.

The arrest came even as women started to celebrate Women's Month this March.

"Is this the way the AFP and the Arroyo administration greet women on Women's Month?" Emmi de Jesus, Gabriela secretary general, said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

According to De Jesus, the security patrol that arrested the four was participating in operations to secure US troops participating in the ongoing Balikatan exercises in Southern Tagalog.

"The incident only goes to show that the security of the American soldiers is priority over the civil and human rights of the Filipino people," she said.

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, the commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command, however, said the four women were suspected New People's Army rebels.

He said they were arrested by the police and the military on Tuesday in Sampaloc, Quezon on suspicion they were spying on troops taking part in the Balikatan in Luisiana town in Laguna.

"The communists have previously declared that they would attack the Balikatan forces," Cabuay told newsmen.

He also presented to newsmen copies of supposedly communist documents that were confiscated from the four suspects.

One of the documents gave instructions on how to collect revolutionary taxes.

Cristina Palabay, Gabriela Women's Party secretary general, added that the illegal arrest of the women leaders is the latest reaffirmation of the military and police's record of being the worst human rights violators in the country.

Gabriela demanded the immediate end to the Balikatan and called for the immediate release of the detained women leaders.

On Wednesday, Supt. Rueben Theodore Sindac, chief of the Quezon Police Intelligence and Investigation Office, reported the arrest of Leonila Manalo, Miralyn Gamba, Aileen Ramos and Nancy Elle.

Sindac said the four were arrested Tuesday noon while allegedly conducting a lecture inside the Delgado Resort in Barangay Batan.

A police report said at least three .38 cal. revolvers, a fragmentation grenade and communist documents were seized from the women.

Sindac said they were also investigating whether the captured suspects could also be part of an NPA hit team that killed Senior Supt. Eduardo Sebastian, former Quezon police chief, on Jan. 12.

When the INQUIRER visited the women currently detained at the Quezon provincial jail in Lucena City, they assailed police and the military for concocting lies and deceit in their supposed arrest.

"We're not NPA rebels," said Gamba, Gabriela-Quezon chair. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Outage spoils start of Bukidnon feast

MALAYBALAY CITY—A sudden power interruption spoiled Tuesday's start of the Kaamulan, Bukidnon's annual thanksgiving festival.

A fuming Gov. Jose Ma. Zubiri immediately called up the office of the National Transmission Corp. but it did not help.

Because of the 20-hour power outage that started about 5 p.m. Tuesday, a scheduled concert sponsored by San Miguel Beer at the capitol grounds here, which people have been looking forward to, had been cancelled.

Those operating food stalls said they were hoping for brisk sales but the power outage drove people away from the capitol.

Dustin Estrada, one of the food concessionaires, told the INQUIRER that his goat *caldereta* dish, worth about P800, was spoiled.

"I would have lost much if I bought the goat. Had I known that the power would not be immediately restored, I could have already asked friends to order and pay for it later," Estrada said.

Danilo Jumawan, another food stall owner, told the INQUIRER that he only reached about three percent of his target sales.

Except for some enterprising children who sold kerosene-fueled lamps, none of the stall operators made much money.

Rufino Magbanua, Transco spokesperson, said the power failure was caused by a damage in the insulator of the 69 kilovolt line that runs between Valencia City and Buseo in Quezon town. ***Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2005 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER A 19

ENTERTAINMENT

Not invited to Princess' wedding

By Harriet B. Cruz

ACTRESS Princess Punzalan, set to marry her American boyfriend this year, did not invite ex-husband Willie Revillame to the wedding.

That was "out of deference," according to Willie himself.

"I wouldn't go over with to invitation," Willie told Inquirer. Entertainment in a recent one-on-one at the ABS-CBN compound. "That's not good for her."

Princess and her boyfriend are planning to live in the US.

"In my heart, I'm very happy that she found a loving relationship," the TV host added. "I hope he is the right man for her."

Their marriage was announced several years ago.

Willie said he and Princess continued to help each other "emotionally."

They frequently send text messages to each other, he said, and pretended to show this writer some of text messages.

One read: "I was reading Psalm 113, then I remembered you. I prayed that will happen to you."

Willie explained, "The psalm is about encouragement."

Another SMS said: "I thank God. There's no difference between us."

Willie said Princess even called him up when she started dating. "Princess said, 'I want you to know it from me first.' I told her to go for whatever made her happy."

Willie is hosting a show on ABS-CBN again. He was fired by the second time last year after uttering "el bruto" remarks" on the insurance client, "Bisaya ang Tsaplet Boys."

Movie and Television Review and Classification Board Chief Marissa Lasquerda complained to the station after Willie and co-emcees Boy Abunda and co-host, Mahal, who was then celebrating her birthday, were fun late to finally lose his temper.

"I bear no grudge against Chairman Lagumbay," said Willie. "We can each other even in a restaurant, and I even eat lechi."

In 1999, the MTRCB suspended Revillame and co-hosts Anjo Yllana and Randy Santiago for alleged vulgar behavior in the treatment of contestants in the Calendar Girl segment of the show.

In July 2004, the network suspended Revillame and Rimada for a week for uttering a Tagalog expression he used to boo.

"She said I should be thankful for this chance to work for the network again," Willie said of Lagumbay. "I am. My bosses said I'm back only because the people want me. I will work hard to repay them."

"Pinoy Dream" airs back-to-back with Eat Bulaga's "Pilipinas, Game Ka Na Ba" Mondays to Fridays. Willie is backed up by three cozy hosts—Joy Villareal, Janelle Jones and Eat Abuso.

WILLIE REVILLAME: "But I'm happy for her."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Friday, March 4, 2005

TUESDAY 7:30 PM and 10:00 PM

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY 7:00 PM and 10:00 PM

American Idol

ABC

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TUWING MIYERKULES pagkatapos ng American Idol

Ating inatilisan

Cheri Mercado

Dito lang sa ABC

INQ INQ TV TV

Lawmaker dares Church to debate

From page A1

Contraceptives

The bill, co-authored by 52 representatives, has been opposed by primary debate by the House committee on women, chaired by Nueva Ecija Rep. Josefina Joson.

But Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said much of the criticism directed at Ligtas Buntis could be traced to misinterpretation.

He said the projects was promoted, not as population control, but as safeguarding the health of mothers and children.

"We want to get pregnant women, as well as those who are not to get pregnant, into a health system that can actually advise them and provide them services. That's the main purpose [of the program]," Dayrit told reporters at a press conference.

Lawmakers as target

Lagman said the campaign of the CBCP against the controversial bill, "targets not only the faithful but more so legislators with greater meaning."

He said HB 3773 was primarily based on his original HB 31, which proposed, among other things, the non-compulsory ideal family size of two children and the mandatory "age-appropriate" sex education from Grade 5 to fourth year high school, with a common curriculum for public and private schools.

"Unfortunately the Church is greeting it either grossly misinformed or deliberately misinforming the people about the actual issues," Lagman said.

He pointed out that, under HB 3773, only needlessly safe and legal contraceptives would be disseminated, and the distribution of abortifacients (or abortion-inducing drugs) would not be allowed.

Gloria Rep. Gilbert Remulla, one of the co-authors, said the Church had branded the bill as "antifamily" and "antilife." He said a vote message had spread claiming that the proposed law was sanctioning abortion.

"It is very unfortunate that this vote message is apparently being disseminated by supposedly pious people who are supposed to speak only of the truth," he said, adding:

"I have opposed to it that measure should stop spreading falsehood and misperceptions."

Remulla said Congress would never enact a law that would promote an "unlawful act like abortion."

He said he would be the first to withdraw his support for the bill if its detractors could offer solutions to the population problem.

Informed choice

According to Lagman, HB 3773 condemns abortion as a criminal act.

He said safe and legal contraceptives actually prevented unwanted pregnancies that were the major cause of abortions, which numbered "more than 400,000 annually."

"There is no ban against the Church-endorsed natural family planning methods because information and access are universally promoted for all modes of family planning, from the natural to the modern, except abortion," Lagman said.

The proposed law will not be coercive because it promotes "the freedom of informed choice where women and couples are free" to adopt their chosen methods of family planning, he said.

Dayrit also said that under Ligtas Buntis, health workers would not go around distributing pills or condoms to couples who did not want them or knew any thing about them.

"I assure the bishops that we continue to work hand in hand with the health workers that there should be no coercion," he said, stressing that the program's "focus" area "when the family needs and what it may want."

A matter of conscience

Reported in several today's radio and TV news broadcasts, Archbishop Fernando Capalla, Bishop Deogracias Iniguez, Bishop Teodoro Bacani and El Shaddai members, representatives of Shalom communities, pro-life organizers, and others assembled by the CBCP Episcopal Commission on Family and Life.

Dayrit said the rally should be taken positively because it would expand the discussion on family planning, reproductive health and population control.

"The Church as an institution is a priori against any form of contraception or any form of sterilization," he said. "That should be made clear to everyone. [As] a Catholic country, that is what they teach, and Catholics should listen to their message."

But there should also be openness to those Catholics who do not believe in the message, Dayrit said.

He urged the people to view Ligtas Buntis in accordance with their conscience, and said those opposed to it could serve as "conscientious objectors."

"You can decide on the basis of your religious belief. If it's against your principle, then number it," he said.

Dayrit cited the case of a health worker who had an "extreme aversion" to the idea of Ligtas Buntis: "It's OK if she doesn't want to support it at all."

'Save the family'

Also expected to attend today's rally are members of the newly formed Kilusang Pamilya Kontra Ligtas Pantiba (KPKLP).

Pete Villanueva, president of the Church Council for the Laity and a KSLP member, described HB 3773 and Ligtas Buntis as "government projects that aim to destroy the stability of the family and disregard its assets."

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, founder of Pro-Life Philippines, said the government should not interfere in family planning because, in his opinion, "the answer to the country's economic problem is good governance, not population control."

Atienza also said the propagation of birth control would eventually give rise to the practice of abortion.

A Muslim leader in Quiapo, Imam Amerol Gulam Ambolong, agreed. "Ith of the Islamic faith are against abortion. It is like killing somebody, and Muslims do not believe in killing, especially in the innocent."

Foreign groups

Atienza raised the specter of foreign groups lobbying for laws that would promote the use of contraceptives.

He claimed that foreigners feared population increase less this empower the Philippine government to become more independent.

Lawyer Jo Imbong of the CBCP cited the release of $1.6 million from the United Nations fund for population control, supposedly for the Philippines' reproductive health program.

"There is money for so-called reproductive health, but not for school buildings," she said.

Generation of sex maniacs

Imbong also said the campaign to promote the use of anticonception pills failed to reveal the side effects of such devices on women's health.

The KSLP ruled against what it said was the promotion of immorality through sex education.

"Can you imagine sex education in Grade 5? I don't want my children to go down that dark path. We will be creating a generation of sex maniacs," Atienza said. With a report from Gelle B. Sahiron/PDI

Issuance of nat'l ID only needs guidelines—Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SIMPLE act of issuing guidelines before implementing a national identification system is enough to make it legal even without going through the legislative route, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to issue an executive order ordering the adoption of an "all purpose ID" would address all legal issues raised in a 1998 Supreme Court decision declaring as unconstitutional (1) optional/without Congress approval.

"If there are guidelines, and if those guidelines are observed when an agency other than Congress [implements the ID system], that will be a valid delegation of legislative power," said Bunye, a lawyer.

He said the tollroad's cutting—that from President Fidel Ramos' planned national ID program was a usurpation of Congress' power to legislate—was due to the absence of guidelines, which made it an invalid delegation of power.

That is why the Arroyo has announced the National Economic and Development Authority to draft within 10 days the guidelines for the adoption of an all purpose ID that would incorporate data contained in Philhealth cards, voter IDs, and cards issued by the Social Security System and Government Service Insurance System.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita expressed confidence that this time, the government would hurdle all legal impediments to the establishment of a national ID system. But he could not explain exactly how.

"I spoke with several leaders of the Senate and the House, and they said that we don't need a law for it, and that an EO would suffice... I suppose that if this comes out, somebody would have to go to court and [so the Supreme Court decide on it," Ermita said.

Even Mercedes Tuason, the President's chief legal counsel, could not quite clear things up.

"We can address clarity as thanking that we are reading on constitutional grounds," she said.

As far as Senate President Franklin Drilon is concerned, the best way to swing the controversial proposal is the Senate-favored simple dispute by way talking about it. With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana

IDs for newborn babies, too

From page A1

birth certificate.

The idea of naming IDs to newborns is well-implemented while Congress goes through the paces of enacting a law on the controversial ID system that the administration is pushing.

The President said the concept of a unified ID had also been given a push through the electronic card system that the Government Service Insurance System had established for its members.

"Since the GSIS was the first to come out with the Lead, we will now require the Social Security System, the Land Transportation Office, and other agencies to come up with cards operable with the GSIS cards," Ms Arroyo said here on Tuesday.

After said the government would also have to come up with a system not on the numbering of the IDs.

The President has directed Secretary Romulo Neri of the National Economic and Development Authority to take charge of efforts to produce ID cards compatible with those of the various government agencies, to approximate a system of ID systems.

Neri also supervises the National Statistics Office. Carla P. Gomez, Phil Haspan Bawsan

Demonstrations greet Mining Act's 10th year

By D.J. Yap

STANDING less than 5 feet tall, Nelson Mollet of Tribung Magkukayan Dumagat clenched his fist yesterday against a gargantuan enemy: the Philippine mining industry.

The 32-year-old leader of the Emerald Lagos Aeta Association flashed arms with environment, church and militant groups in protest rallies and vigils and what they considered a decade of atrocities against the environment and indigenous peoples.

Yesterday was the 10th anniversary of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, on occasion anti-mining advocates marched with a series of demonstrations along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City, and Mendiola in Manila.

The lone representative of his people, Mollet said mining activities in the country had displaced indigenous communities, robbed them of their culture, and degraded the environment where they lived.

At least two mining firms are digging for gold and copper in his hometown, said Mollet.

Christine Bautista, a leader of the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, said protest actions held simultaneously in Baguio, Davao City, Iloilo and Surigao City sought the repeal of the Mining Act.

NIDA BLANCA SLAY CASE

Rod wants warrant junked

By Armand N. Nocum

AMERICAN Rod Lauren Strunk, prime suspect in the murder of his wife, actress Nida Blanca, has asked the Supreme Court to compel the serving of a warrant for his arrest.

Through his lawyers from the Ilagan's Reyna Law Office, Strunk also asked the High Court to throw out the criminal complaint against him for the murder of Blanca "for lack of probable cause."

2001 crime

Blanca was found dead inside her car parked at the trash floor of the Atlanta Centre building in San Juan on May 7, 2001.

In a 62-page petition for review on certiorari, Strunk's lawyers sought that "a writ of permanent injunction be issued restraining the implementation of arrest warrant against Rod Strunk and the conduct of the trial insofar as Strunk is concerned."

The arrest warrant was issued in May last year by Judge Alex L. Quiroz of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 266.

The Department of Justice is using the order of Quiroz in the cancellation case against Strunk, who left the country for California in January 2002.

In his petition, Strunk asked the court not to allow the 5-year-old case to drag on in the face of alleged lack of evidence linking him to the crime.

'Height of injustice'

"To allow these criminal proceedings to continue in the face of the clear insufficiency of evidence against him would be the height of injustice," the document said.

It added, "The demands of justice mandate that this unfounded case against him be dismissed for its lack of persuasive, competent and credible evidence."

The petition noted that to date, the case has been anchored on the "tweaked and admittedly flawed and obviously false confession" of Strunk's co-accused, Philip Medel.

Medel, who turned up to the crime, later claimed that he was tortured into making a confession.

But late last year, a new witness – husband and channel that she saw Strunk at the crime scene with Medel and another suspect the night before Blanca's body was discovered.

Government prosecutors said they had two more witnesses who would corroborate the claims of Medel and "Ang" Unknown.

LOTTO RESULTS

SUERTRES

5 2 5

SIX DIGIT

8 4 0 5 5 6

EZ2

3 9

(All winners in small amount)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

2 6 27 28 41 49

P25,682,388.90

SWEEPSTAKES

3 8 7 1 4 9 5

P100,000.00

BOOK WORMS
Students play on a slide made to look like a stack of books in a Quezon City park during Thursday's celebration of World Book Day, said to encourage students to develop a reading habit.

Police, NBI clash on who burned van

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE POLICE and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) both tagged communist rebels as responsible for the torching of an ABS-CBN news van in January.

But as to which communist group it was, the NBI's and police's intelligence units could not have disagreement.

The NBI has pointed to the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade as the culprit.

Two suspects

Yesterday, the bureau presented two suspects, allegedly members of the group, in the burning of the P21-million TV van.

But Director Rodeo Zerdin, a senior intelligence official said the police's former spy chief, says a special operations group of the Communist Party of the Philippines was responsible for the burning.

Not only that, Zerdin says the CPP-NPA was actually after the ABS-CBN owner in Quezon City. He did not, however, explain why the leftist guerrilla movement would want to paralyze the TV network's operations.

Split

The RPA-ABB split from the CPP in the 1990s and is one of many groups that left the main communist body because of differences in ideology and strategy.

The two groups are hostile to each other.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco had said the bombing was "uncharacteristically ABB" and was apparently baffled why it would attack the ABS-CBN van.

But in a statement, the RPA-ABB, more known for targeting political and police figures, denied the accusation although it said the suspects were its comrades.

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Sony Shop

SURFER

METRO

WHAT used to be an antique shop and office on Lony McKinley Road is now just ripe embers and a memory after a two-hour fire hit a bungalow in Forbes Park early yesterday morning. (STEVEN CAMELO)

Antiques, house destroyed in Forbes fire

By Tarra V. Quismundo

$1 LESS than two hours, millions of pesos went up in smoke when fire hit a one-story house in a dirty Makati City village in dawn yesterday.

Investigators said the blaze started around 1:45 a.m. in a bungalow that housed an office and an antique shop on No. 44 McKinley Road, Forbes Park in Makati City.

"Residents of the house woke up to the smell of smoke, but by the time they were able to gather their belongings, the blaze had already spread," said Fire Officer I Ervic Gavieres, arson investigator from the Makati City Fire Department.

Gavieres said five employees of Ruby Piazza, who had leased the house from owner George Montano, were sleeping inside the house when the fire started. The five escaped without injuries, but a big part of the bungalow was damaged.

Destroyed in the fire were pieces of antique furniture and decor, as well as home furnishings and appliances.

The fire department has yet to determine the cause of the blaze, and an estimate on damages was also unavailable.

Gavieres said he has yet to locate the portion of the house with the heaviest damage.

Investigators said there were no cooking appliances inside the office where the fire may have originated.

Roldan faces kidnap raps

By Armand M. Nocum

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice (DOJ) yesterday filed kidnap-for-ransom charges against actor and former Congressman Jaime Roldan for the abduction of a 3-year-old Chinese-Filipino boy, saying it has "sufficient evidence" to pin him down as the mastermind.

In a five-page complaint filed before the Pasig City Regional Trial Court, state prosecutors cited as evidence the confession of two of eight suspects in the kidnapping, police surveillance reports on the movements of the suspects, and transcriptions of outgoing and incoming messages from one of three cellular phones used by the group involved in the ransom negotiations.

"Upon examination, we found sufficient evidence to indict Roldan of the crime charged," DOJ state prosecutor 3 Pablo C. Formaran told reporters.

The complaint also said that "probable cause" exists against Roldan, whose real name is Michel Tap Gonzalvo.

The complaint was signed by Formaran, prosecution attorney Irwin A. Moreya and approved by Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito R. Zuño and Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Fadullon.

Also accused of kidnapping are Alberto Pagdanganan, Noel San Andres, Ramon Ocejada, Rowena San Andres, Octavio Ganzon and Adrian Domingo.

The six...excluding Roldan's alleged lover Suzette Wong—have not yet been formally charged. Wong is not to appear before the DOJ at 9 a.m. today to face a preliminary investigation.

Formaran said they had to move quickly after Roldan withdrew his waiver of detention on Wednesday, a move that would have initiated him from detention at the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response (Paner) headquarters in Camp Crame to the house.

According to the complaint, Kenchi Yu, who was kidnapped on Feb. 9 near the SFC Tower, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, was held by the suspects in two separate safehouses in Quezon City.

The break came when Paner operatives received a tip on the presence of the suspects and the boy in a safehouse, and promptly placed the home under surveillance. Soldan, Garcia, Wong and Pagdanganan were seen visiting the house, the complaint said.

The victim was rescued in the early morning of Feb. 20, but the night before, Paner operatives saw "Gonzalvo, Garcia, [Wong] and Pagdanganan... having a meeting" at the Manzana restaurant in Quezon City owned by Roldan. The kidnappers, using three mobile phones, later demanded P200 million in ransom from the Yus, but lowered this to P5 million.

Garcia and Pagdanganan also executed "extra-judicial confessions," sworting up to the crime. Soldan also tagged Roldan as the "mastermind together with Suzette [Wong]."

Charlito Gavestan, the boy's nanny who was with the victim when he was kidnapped, had identified Pagdanganan, San Andres and Domingo on the slideshow.

'No longer the village protector'

EVEN before former Multinational Village Homeowners Association president Ariel Gavestan became a suspect in the eyes of authorities and lawmakers, his neighbors already felt he was no longer fit to possess them. Gavestan was booted out of office in their annual association elections last January, using the series of raids on alleged shabu laboratories as their main issue against him.

A resident said yesterday that the homeowners felt it was Gavestan's responsibility to make sure their subdivision was safe from drug syndicates.

A case was also filed against him in the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board for his alleged use of proxy votes in the association's elections, by offering to settle all residents' debts to the association in exchange for votes, another source claimed. The HLURB decided that what he did was illegal, but Gavestan refused to yield his post. (Nikko Dizon)

FRIDAY
MARCH 4, 2005
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A 33
SPORTS
E-mail sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyboy B. Melendres

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Eric back as Coke faces ELR ... A25
Bittersweet day for LA's Kobe ... A27

Southwoods widens PAL lead to 4 over Del Monte

ARTEMIO
Murakami lining putt on No. 14

By Manuel R. Carallo

BACOLOD—The future, it seems, has arrived.

Southwoods continued to reap the fruits of a massive long-term program with its young guns keeping their parents at bay after 36 holes of the Philippine Airlines inter-club golf tournament yesterday.

Former SU-Amateur champion Artemio Murakami unearthed a one-under par 69 worth 37 points, leading Southwoods to a 127 Day 2 total at the Manapla course here and 207 overall that boosted his club over Del Monte in four points.

Lone Tanabe matched Murakami's output and Del Monte got 31 from captain Ireneo Soliz as the defending champion totaled 125 for the day and kept the pressure on Southwoods with a 10-5 aggregate.

Cabildoing relegated again and fell 33 points all Southwoods with Jay Dayrit's 34 proving as the team's best score again despite sputtering on two-holes nursing hands.

The Negor Sierras, the namesakes club here, trailed Del Monte by six going into the important third round at the Biddle course in nearby Municipality in Negros Occidental today.

"We're in the best position right now, obviously," said Southwoods' team captain, Jess Herbosora. "The third round will be the most crucial, as we have always looked at Biddle as the course that will decide this tournament."

Southwoods also got 31 points from Laurence Pingkihi and 30 from veteran Jun Jun Plana. Silke Alejandro's 29 was the last score that counted over feisty Marivic Jr.

Rosales chases 2nd title

NWEEK No. 1 Annika Sorenstam will be watching from behind when Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines starts chasing her second straight Kik Pierce Memorial Classic Bowling Monday (Tuesday in the U.S.) at the Montreal Classic Bowling Club in Metairie City, Mexico.

Fresh from winning the season opener last week in the $500 Sports Central Hawaii, Montreal-based Nicolas will be one three-some with former first-choice Grace Park and Aree Song Avenue of the fourteen-fairways in the tournament.

Sorenstam, who recently filed for divorce, makes her season debut playing in the next flight with Amelia Lester Lorena Ochoa and Ai Ishikawa.

Rosales already has earned more than $234,000 (about P13.7 million) in the last three weeks counting the $150,000 first prize in the GBS Open and $94,736 she said Thursday. Rosales ranked 1st playing second in the World Cup in South Africa shortly ranked.

FIRST GENT FUNDING

Keon: Big budget for shooting, athletics

By Jeannine W. Pura

SHOOTING, with just one gold in the last biennial Asian Games, and athletics, with a Philippine contingent high of eight, will enjoy the biggest budget for training in this year's SEA Games.

Shooting will receive P7 million while athletics will get P6 million out of the P40 million the Host Secretariat Foundation raised to bankroll the athletes' training and foreign stints through the generosity of the country's top businessmen and corporations.

Michael Keon, head of the five-man PG group, said the allocation was approved based on the training programs and budget proposals submitted by the national sports associations.

"If they asked for a higher amount than the current allocation set by the EC, we will sit down with them," said Keon, who is also the national training director of the Philippine Sports Commission. "We cannot change the allotted amount. The SEAs have to keep within that range."

Two other sports that will receive crisp chunk of the funds are taekwondo (P5 million) and boxing (P3 million).

"The budget can only be used for equipment, uniform and international exposure," Keon stressed. "But rather than do this arbitrarily and unilaterally, we will do this together with the NSAs so that we can also get their input."

"But we have to see first, as to what to be left there by next week," said Kiery Jones, project director of Gaming Alley in the 90s.

Among the 41 sports competing in the biennial meet, only billiards, chess, bowling, golf, tennis and karate, volleyball and basketball have yet to submit their proposed budget.

Shooting, which is headed by yuppie-turned-brother Art Mananquil, dethroned only-son gold medal in the Busan 2002 SEA Games courtesy of the men's trap shooting team.

Athletics finished with eight golds.

The other members of the Godfather Committee is composed of Philippine Olympic Committee officials Steve Hontiveros and Joey Romasanta, and PG Foundation's Butch Tanseco and Tom Manglicmot.

MICHAEL Keon, PG Sport is more fun.

FIGHT FOR HEARTS. This early, sabin giant MIKO is drumming up the Pacquiao-Marquez showdown on its website.

'Manila Ice' plot sure to stop Morales cold

By Sabrel L. Lagumbay, Contributor

FAMOUS American trainer Freddie Roach has developed a "secret weapon" that he said will be the key to Manny Pacquiao's victory over Erik "El Terrible" Morales on March 19 at the 15,000-capacity MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Dubbed "Manila Ice," Roach said the new weapon is specifically designed to counter the Mexican boxer's notorious right hook.

Roach told Boxing Central: "Manny was become famous as boxing's version of the Exxon Guy when he drops the hook on Morales."

Meanwhile, Morales continued his rigid preparation in the Olympic mountains in Mexico, indicating that he too knot training "like old times" and accompanied only by his people closest to him.

Morales traveled to Tijuana to give early this week and returned to the turbulent streets of Ciudad Juarez, where he trained on his speed in a match against Pacquiao's fighter.

"The duel with Pacquiao will be difficult," Morales admitted. "This fight will be very important for me. I have something against Pacquiao for he pummeled a very important fight for me. I will avenge myself."

Meanwhile, Pacquiao's sparring against Morales is expected to be augmented by his compatriots, who have already booked their appearance at the MGM Grand.

Expected to be at ringside are Gabriela 'sexy' Representative Board Chair Eric Buhain, who is set to depart on March 17, as well as longtime supporters Miss Lotsa, Lito Mendoza, Grey Goose and Superwalk's wife, Jinkee.

Making them are sportsmen Tony Ardigue and Nelson Sabal, Sen. Lito Lapid, Boxer Bat Dee Chavit Singson, North Goodman's Emmanuel Pilard, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Gov. Imelda City Mayor Weldo Sabanes and reporter's honey Siegfrid Fortuna.

Southwoods pads PAL lead

"Four points is not so bad," said Abet. "There will be it, though Stalla could very well double things."

Paul Milanes salvaged a 20- nad Sara Milanes a 27. Wayne Thomas' 22-20 rout spent for Del Monte.

Manalacan actually opened with Mother on three of his first four holes.

But at the unpredictable hostess outfit teamed to beat Andrew Gonzalez and Dumalao had to scramble to keep their noses down.

"It was tough out there," Bitalac said. "The boat bothered the fairways so much that you'll never really know what you are going to get."

Buyers found the greenside bunker on the 14th for bogey and barbs pick up on the next hole after looking for drive and failing to get on strike team.

He birdied the 18th from eight feet, though, and helped ease Gonzalez from what could have been a really terrible day.

At Tanguisco, whose clubs were repaired last on the eve of the second round, failed to take advantage of the home course with the Sharks shoot a 31. Jun Bonito assembled a 33 and either of Matthew Manzano or Ronnie Encarnacion 24 counted for Cardoborg.

"My form in strike was there to," Manzano said. Cardoborg now plays against Angeles Elks, rules were folded for the longest team possible for the third round.

"If we don't make a move, that's it. It's going to be over."

Meanwhile, Magtin bounced back with a 119 at Bataan and took the lead in the Finalists Division with a 237 total. Tabu, the overnight leader, slumped with a 121 to finish in one at 239.

Robert Malapo scored 34, Jose Mari Bolivarez hacked to 35, Justin Ignacio 38 and Frederico Loreto a 27 to make up the Magtin total.

Record turnout, PPV take expected on March 19

MORE than 10,000 tickets have already been sold for the March 19 "Coming with Everything" showdown between Manny Pacquiao and Erik "El Terrible" Morales.

Organizers predict the fight will eclipse the attendance and pay-per-view take of the third Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales showdown last November as Morales and Filipino fans are expected to come most of the remaining tickets.

Millions more around the world will have pay-per-view cable channels as well, which will extend reach of Morales vs Pacquiao.

As of yesterday, 10,000 tickets at $75 have been purchased. Only the $400 ringside tickets and those at $300, $200 and $125 are available. Barbara J. Aggarwal, Contributor

DHL-Nat'l Am golf, SEA Games qualifier

EIGHT a spirited battle for top honors in the DHL/WWF/Esquires National amateur Golf Championships with the 18th staging of the event to serve as one of the battles for the selection of the national team members to the Southeast Asian Games late this year.

Jun Bonito, the event dominant player last year with three victories, including this one and the national meeting championship, heads the entire dozen-some that includes Asian Games veteran Jay Bautista.

Meanwhile, Michael Abbas, Antonio Manalacan, Ricardo Yuchan, Marvin Dumandan, Homer Sy Jr. and Teodito Antonio.

The four-day event then of March 8 at the north course of the Canlubang golf complex in Laguna and although the home team, led by Bonito and Pagunsan, enjoy the so-called local knowledge of the par-72 layout, the rest of the field is expected to go the native-contended for it. In such battle in DHA Games squad.

Golf, which is not a part of the last SEA Games in Vietnam but has been the country's gold mainly source in past SEAG displays, will make comeback this year.

The ladies' squad is limited to be announced by Jaycee Agulo, the national coach.

The deadline for submission of entries is set tomorrow at 12 noon. Entry fee is pegged at P1,500 for men and P1,000 for ladies. For details, call PSGAP at 3236987 or 5201300 and Cargill at 6465 5401901.

Reluctant, if not accidental, hero

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

BACOLOD CITY—Some golfers become surgeons, congressmen, governors, senators and even presidents of this republic. Some become golfers, after they get themselves elected into public office. Like President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But Carlo Gamboa is different, a golfer to the core. So he never aspire after saying his best not to become one.

"He was a reluctant mayor," said a friend. Even Carlo "Never in his wildest dreams did Carlo think of becoming mayor."

From the day he finished schooling at La Salle where he was a basketball star and varsity, Carlo Gamboa was never known to be a political animal. He has admitted a million times he'd never enter politics.

So how come he's now mayor of Silay, the booming city just a pan's away from this bustling metropolis by the sea?

It is supposed that Carlo's cousin had enlisted his Democratic guide as mayor of Silay City Carlo had been called to run because of his lobbied managerial expertise in running a corporation in Manila for nearly three decades.

"In the beginning, Carlo vehemently refused," my friend said. "But in the end, he relented to avoid a family feud."

The irony is that after one term, Carlo Gamboa has been asked not to seek re-election.

He refused.

"I wouldn't leave the post just like that as I had outgoing promise," Carlo said to me during the birthday party of Art Ledesma on the 20-th on the famous Bleacher Lounge along Lacson Street. "I just couldn't turn my back on my constituents. That'd be tantamount to betraying them."

His decision to run again sparked a family spat that would soon escalate into a full-blown squabble. His first cousin, the former mayor, became his main foe but Alex is a lousy basketball because the talk of the town. As a result, they are not on speaking terms up to now.

Spectator Digress.

Always, everybody seems to want to be the leader in this country that knows no morality and none enough to accept defeat.

It happens almost elsewhere, even overseas.

The late Filipinos longings—no dual citizenship stockholders or otherwise—and other measures, you'll see the leaders declare victory out of the club associations. Sportsmanship is deeply set in their vocabulary.

Look, we used to see only a Chinoman in any city in the world.

Not anymore. Today, there's a proliferation of Koreans everywhere.

In New York City, quite from its core Little Italy, a Vietnamese is now slowly emerging to be a power player near New York's Chinatown.

Anyway, after winning a second term but May Carlo Gamboa embarked on his frenetic mission to concretize the plans and projects he had started in his first three years in office.

Already, he has boosted electricity to 80 percent of the total areas in Silay including the city's economic district.

On record, Carlo Gamboa is the only mayor after hour the garbage of every resident, making Silay one of the cleanest in the country.

In its drug scene where residents will roam around barefoot, Carlo Gamboa has provided free school lunch to elementary as well as high school students. I have yet to see a mayor implement such a project, with the city budget not too fixed to it.

To boost tourism and supporters helping me with my projects and I couldn't think them enough," Carlo said.

And take this to 2007, the Bacolod International Airport will open to Silay. With ground-breaking ceremonies held only last December, the huge P1.2-billion airport is estimated to become one of the country's most modern.

That underground more projects like a foreign national scheme that would generate massive employment opportunities for Silay residents' time endorsed Carlo Gamboa en-out to both the citizens and high-school city folk alike.

"Silay is the premier agricultural (sugar plantations), but with the way things are shaping up, my city might soon be progressive town for the benefit of the people," said Carlo. "I guess I'm stuck to you."

So getting himself boost into his position as mayor of Silay I must point to still has the aces down below.

Still, despite his hectic schedule as mayor, Carlo Gamboa, whose father was originally from Batangas and who married into the prominent Gamboas of Silay, has not forgotten his allies but owed to governance, golf.

In fact, he was one of the stars when Lanao del Norte hosted golf—tonight PAL Senator Gamboa ride on Feb. 27 at SOGOC.

"You mayor's golf is serious and I'm like a fish thrown to dry land," Carlo said.

Who said politicians are the last to change pace from decision-offer-truth on documents?

I say I'd be the golfer.

Southwoods Golf Club (international), Aubrey, GE Aircraft Engines, Boeing, Honeywell International, Globe Platinum, Jeep 93.5, Royal Caribbean International, Golden Nuggets Hotel and Hotels Inn are the major sponsors of the annual tournament.

Steven Tolentino, Radio Mindanao Network, President White and Spirits, Star Cruises and 90.3 Wheels are the corporate backers of the Ayala Alabang Invitational Tournament. Country Club Hotel, Asia Brewery Inc., BIGCorp, Tambay Bloom and Air Philippines are the event sponsors.

The scores:

Championship—(54 holes/par 216): 237, 242-Del Monte (+20/121, 247-Los Baños (+31/128), 249-Southwoods Batangas (+33/130), 250-Ulaya (+34/0), 252-Subic (+36/0), 253-Manila (+37/0), 254-Bataan (+38/0), 256-Bacolod (+40/0), 258-Baliuag (+42/0), 260-Alabang (+44/0), 262-Mimosa (+46/0), 264-Tagaytay (+48/0), 266-Baguio (+50/0), 268-Clark (+52/0), 270-Manila (+54/0), 272-Subic (+56/0), 274-Bataan (+58/0), 276-Bacolod (+60/0), 278-Baliuag (+62/0), 280-Alabang (+64/0), 282-Mimosa (+66/0), 284-Tagaytay (+68/0), 286-Baguio (+70/0), 288-Clark (+72/0), 290-Manila (+74/0), 292-Subic (+76/0), 294-Bataan (+78/0), 296-Bacolod (+80/0), 298-Baliuag (+82/0), 300-Alabang (+84/0), 302-Mimosa (+86/0), 304-Tagaytay (+88/0), 306-Baguio (+90/0), 308-Clark (+92/0), 310-Manila (+94/0), 312-Subic (+96/0),

Eric back as Coke faces SLR

AFTER asking for a trade, Eric Altamirano (center) finally joined his teammates with the Alaska Aces. [illegible]

AMID the hoopla surrounding the national team and the mystery shrouding giant imports, new Coca-Cola coach Eric Altamirano has found the perfect low-key situation to make his Philippine Basketball Association comeback.

"I like it better this way," said the two-time champion coach. "I prefer working in a situation where I can just do my job instead of having to deal with the distractions that usually accompany celebrities."

Altamirano last coached in the league in the 2002 All-Filipino Cup with Purefoods, before he was called to serve the national team in the Busan Asian Games. After being part of the bronze-medal team that came to within seconds of a championship duel against China, Altamirano returned to find Ryan Gregorio already warmed to the Rookies coaching post.

After two years as point guard of San Miguel's winning goaltrail basketball team, Altamirano went to coach Coca-Cola in the opening game of the Fiesta Conference, where the Tigers take on Sta. Lucia at 4:30 p.m. at the Philsports in Pasig.

While Altamirano will be spending quality time today, the San Miguel rebuilding team will make their debut when they open the six-week of the tournament opening as the outdoor crowd for the night's matinee.

"I think all the teams will be starting their imports," Altamirano admitted. "What happened was almost every team took on the best talent available. But, they still have some of their coaches so they are going after."

As Coca-Cola, the reinforcement will be Virgin Islands native Jaja Edwards, who basketball scouts describe as a tireless worker underneath the boards. The 6-11 Edwards has had his share of overseas action, having toured leagues in China, Russia, Italy, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

Sta. Lucia tapped its hand-picked to replace original pick Nate Williams, who reportedly flunked a medical test by the Coolers and demonstrators board.

San Miguel, which takes on Alaska in the 7:30 p.m. nightcap, will rate up a knock-down bargain, one of the imports who were sparkling performers.

He is not Bailey but a hard worker who can get the rebounds" we need," said San Miguel coach Jong Uichico of Rangers, a 6-foot-9 former Duke star from.

Rangers will be tested against Alaska's Lorenzo Sewell, who will display a move like that he shook off Louie Vela—at least, temporarily—after Dan Alfaro, who worked to be traded in the offseason, holed a one-and-a-half year contention with the aces. Everybody, Alfaro, and the really improved Reynel Hugnatan will serve as coach Tim Cone's main men in the post.

Favored Taiwanese clobber RP spikers in 3 sets

By Rey Laurea

CEBU CITY—The Philippines got a rampling of world-class competition as it bowed to defeating Chinese Taipei, 25-21, 25-14, 25-20, last night in the Men's Volleyball World Championship Asia Pool C qualifying at the University of San Carlos Gym here.

Not even the boisterous support of more than 5,000 fans could pump up the Filipinos as they were simply overpowered by the taller, more skilled Taiwanese, who handed their co-host's ride in the tournament that will select two Asian representatives to the second round of the worldwide championships.

Trailing the players 4 feet 4 or taller, the Filipino team from their own international experience could the win to one hour and three minutes.

Head Coach Francisco Elorde presented even the Taiwanese's consistent attack with 17 and 11 hits, respectively. They got ample help from 6-foot-7 Chang Ming-Kang, the Taiwanese's mainstay talent, who added eight points and 4 blocks.

"We have a very strong team," said Chinese-Taipei coach Chang Ming-kang. "We never let discouraged, the crowd in the first set."

Unable to prove the Taiwanese' opening duo were well, Filipino [illegible] and Rolando Gallo were left to [illegible] eight points each after posting in 16 and 13 in the Philippines' 25-21, 25-17, 25-20 romp over Macau in the opener on Wednesday.

[illegible] Jun Carlos Bautista 9 p.m.—Chinese Taipei vs Kenya 11 p.m.—Macau vs Indonesia

It is any consolation, the Filipinos are not concerned with the Taiwanese, who are ranked 30th in the world and fourth in Asia behind superpowers China, South Korea and Japan. The hosts are gunning for the Indonesians, the reigning Southeast Asian Games titlist.

The Indonesians crushed the Taiwanese, 25-23, 25-19, 25-14, Wednesday night and Tan Sri Jones, honorary secretary general of the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association and PSVB representative, said the Filipinos have a chance against them.

But Indonesia's Chinese coach Li Qinglong said he would really pump up a stronger squad for the Manila SEAG with the presence of a seven-pro volleyball league in Jakarta.

"We have the most experienced players and some very good young ones," said Li, who steered Indonesia to its only volleyball title in the Vietnam SEAG.

"But we have to send players to the world championship to improve our level of play further."

Despite their SEAG experience, the hosts are considered by the PVB, the sport's governing body, as underdogs in the tournament.

Earlier, Macau bested Nepal in three hard-fought sets, 30-27, 25-20, 25-21.

The Philippines takes a bye Friday before meeting Indonesia Saturday.

Sponsored primarily by the Philippine Sports Commission, the tournament, which drew more than 4,000 last Friday, is also backed by Bonchon Energy Drink, PCSO, Cebu Pacific and Guerrero Burton, Star Pilsen, Smartcom, Air Philippines, Speed Magazine, Mizu Granada and Metro Manila Pulse.

Serena enters quarterfinals

SERENA Williams reacts after losing a shot to her Russian opponent Elena Bovina. AP

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Leading seeds Lindsay Davenport, Serena Williams and Anastasia Myskina secured second round matches on Wednesday and reached the Dubai Women's Open quarterfinals.

World No. 1 Davenport defeated China's Ai Zheng, 6-2, 7-5, while Australian Open champion Williams survived an early scare to beat Russia's Elena Bovina, 1-6, 6-1, 6-4.

French Open champion and No. 3 seeded Myskina advanced when Marion Bartoli of France retired with left knee tendinitis while trailing, 4-1.

Davenport's quarterfinal opponent on Thursday will be another former #1 ranked player, Czechia Martinez, who ousted seventh-seeded Nathalie Dechy of France, 6-1, 6-2.

Williams will meet Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia, who beat Elena Likhovtseva of Russia, 7-5, 6-4, and Myskina faces eighth-seeded Patty Schnyder of Switzerland, who downed Lilia of China, 6-3, 7-6 (8).

The other quarterfinal pits wild card Sania Mirza of India against Jelena Jankovic of Serbia and Montenegro, who both won on Tuesday.

Davenport says she feel four games to vanquish Je, a qualifier.

"I started well and finished well, but played some to no games in the middle," said Davenport, who had a first-round bye.

She has reached the final of her last two events, the Tokyo indoors last month, and the Australian Open in January when she crushed Martinez in the first round to level their head-to-head record at 8.

Williams, making her first tour appearance since a stomach illness forced her to withdraw before the Paris indoor quarterfinals last month, lost the opening five games to Bovina and the first set 6-1, raising fears she would follow many Tokyo out of the tournament.

But Serena Williams unleashed booming serves and zippy groundstrokes to take the next two sets and win in 66 minutes.

"I don't know what I was doing there tonight," she said. "I think I was trying to find myself somehow." AP

SAN ANTONIO forward Manu Ginobili drives through the Toronto defense for an easy lay-up.

Hewitt hopes to put pressure early on Davis Cup opponents

LLEYTON Hewitt hopes to win big against Alexander Peya and put early pressure on Ancic's in their Davis Cup second-round battle. AP

SYDNEY, Australia—Lleyton Hewitt plans to put early pressure on the visiting Australians and give them the advantage in its Davis Cup World Group first-rounder beginning Friday.

Second-ranked Hewitt was shome to meet world 144th ranked Alexander Peya in one opening singles tie her on grass at the Sydney International Tennis Centre, the 2000 Olympic venue.

Wayne Arthurs, who won his first career singles title last week at Scottsdale, Arizona, will take on Austrian No. 1 Jurgen Melzer, ranked 24th in the world, in the second singles match.

"Hopefully I can go out there and give Lleyton a 1-nil start and put the pressure on Melzer," Rosset said Thursday.

"Melzer knows he's going to have an extremely tough match anyway but if they're 1-love down, it's a lot of pressure-wise for him," he said.

Hewitt said he was surprised to be playing Peya and not the more experienced Julian Knowle, who has been relegated to doubles only.

"I saw how [Peya] play a couple of matches at Wimbledon last year," said Hewitt. "He ended up losing to Roddick in the third round. He pushed Roddick a bit in that match, so he can play on grass. He's a dangerous player."

Arthurs beat Melzer in straight sets at Indianapolis last month in Memphis. Melzer said he wouldn't feel any extra pressure.

"At the end, we need three points," said Melzer. "It doesn't matter how we get there. It's match info? more important than Alex's against Lleyton."

Arthurs will team with veteran Todd Woodbridge against the Austrian's, against of Julian Knowle and Peya on Saturday ahead of Sunday's reverse singles.

The last time the countries met at Vienna in 1989, on an indoor clay court laid over carpet, the home side won 3-0.

Current American captain Thomas Blanco led his side to victory in that match over a team which included Australia's current captain John Fitzgerald and coach Wally Masur.

Australia last won the Davis Cup in 2003.

Hewitt is coming off a long break prompted by a draining Australian open campaign, where he lost in Russian sensation Marat Safin in the finals. AP

Blazers fire Cheeks league fines Arenas

CHEEKS: Player's blood him.

PORTLAND, Oregon—Maurice Cheeks was fired on Wednesday as coach of the Portland Trail Blazers, who have dropped seven of nine games and are in danger of missing the NBA playoffs for the second straight year.

Kevin Pritchard, the team's director of player personnel, was appointed interim head coach, general manager John Shoemaker announced.

Cheeks, now the end of a four-year contract estimated at $12 million, was popular among the players and fans. But when the losses mounted, the owners, he was forced to be on the way out.

Portland's latest defeat was on Tuesday, 108-95 to the defending champion Detroit Pistons. The Blazers (21-33) are in 12th place in the Western Conference, six games behind the Los Angeles Lakers for the eighth and final playoff spot. Cheeks leaves the Blazers with a 162-129 career record.

Meanwhile in Washington, [illegible] point guard Gilbert Arenas fined $7,500 for the fifth [illegible] during the referee's dressing [illegible] loss to Sacramento.

Arenas was called for a [illegible] Carolus Mobley down the [illegible] 1.5 seconds to play, resulting [illegible] free throws that decided the game [illegible] 106 victory by the Kings [illegible] day. Arenas scored 243 points but [illegible] upset he's had just seven free throws [illegible]

"I don't understand it [illegible]," Arenas said. "I probably drew the line so many times at the league, and I don't get some calls anybody gets. He [illegible] between, who are three five throws right.

"Because he's Jelly, he gets by, added. "Because I'm big when I get hit, they don't do thing with it. Last night, I drive have that 20-something Green, tonight I should have 20-something free throws. I guess I've got to get more respect. I'm hoping to get that call."

mph

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Bittersweet day for LA's Kobe

Lakers star finally settles rape case

DENVER—Kobe Bryant and the 20-year-old woman who accused him of rape nearly two years ago settled her civil lawsuit against him, ending a sordid case that tarnished one of the NBA's brightest young stars.

Terms were not released. A statement issued Wednesday by The Associated Press by Bryant's attorneys said only that the matter had been resolved "to the satisfaction of both parties."

"The parties and their attorneys have agreed that no further comments about the matter can or will be made," the statement said. A conference for dismissal stipulating that the case can never be refiled was filed simultaneously in Denver federal court.

Bryant was in Boston for a game against the Celtics, where he scored 29 points in a loss.

Asked about the settlement after the game, Bryant asked, "Anybody with basketball questions, gentlemen?"

The agreement probably spells out financial penalties for breaching any details, said Steve Cohn, a Los Angeles attorney familiar with celebrity cases.

"It's in both parties' interests to keep this terms confidential," he said. "That's one of the incentives for the divorce settle. He didn't have to do a deposition, the hard details wouldn't be posted on some website. She didn't have to face the rigors of having a deposition by his lawyers and she'll gain some privacy as well."

Bryant, a 27-year-old married father of one, has apologized for his "behavior that night and for the consequences she has suffered," while insisting the sex was consensual.

The lawsuit was similar to the criminal case, accusing Bryant of flirting with the woman during a tour of the Lodge & Spirit Cocktail Lounge. After he was evicted sign in the woman they began to kiss and Bryant became more aggressive, finally leading her by the flannel while he raped her, the lawsuit said.

AP

KOBE Bryant's fortunes take different paths in different courts.

Celtics ruin celebration, muzzle Bryant in last period to forge victory

BOSTON—Kobe Bryant's problems have moved back to the basketball court. Just 30 minutes after sending a lawsuit filed by the woman who accused him of rape, Bryant scored 17 first-quarter points against Boston. But he was scoreless in the fourth quarter—missing a 3-pointer just before the buzzer—as the Celtics beat Los Angeles 104-101 to send the Lakers to their fourth consecutive loss.

Paul Pierce had 28 points and nine rebounds, Ricky Davis scored 24 points and Antoine Walker had 16 with 13 rebounds in his first game in Boston since being reacquired at the trading deadline. The rejuvenated Celtics have won three straight and four and six straight at home overall.

"This is the great thing about this team, that I love," Walker said. "I don't necessarily have to score 20 points for us to win."

Chucky Atkins had 29 points, scoring 14 in the final 5:26 to keep the Lakers in the game and Bryant finished with 26, making nine of 24 shots—and 0-3 in the fourth, after he complained of a sore right ankle.

"It is was bothering him a lot, I am sure he would have asked out."

Lakers coach Frank Hamblen said. "But he is a tough guy. He is not going to ask out in that situation."

In Philadelphia, Vince Carter scored 26 of his 32 points in the second half, and Clifford Robinson added 18 points to lead the 76ers to a 90-85 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers.

Allen Iverson scored 17 points for Philadelphia, and Chris Webber had only 10 in his return to Philadelphia for the first time since acquiring Webber from Sacramento last week.

The 76ers have won three straight to close within 1½ games of second-place Philadelphia in the Atlantic Division.

In Cleveland, Ray Allen scored 31 points, Vladimir Radmanovic hit five triples and the fourth Supersonic spoiled Dan Gilbert's first game as the Cavaliers' owner with a 120-90 rout.

Allen made three-three-pointers and the opposing Cavaliers, one of the NBA's best outside shooting teams, were 13 of 37 from behind the arc to win their 40th game this season and improve to 3-1—4-1 on the road—since the All-Star break.

Rashard Lewis added 20 points for the Sonics.

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Woods: PGA Tour needs shorter golf season

TIGER Woods has his eyes set on a year with fewer tournaments.

MIAMI—With Tiger Woods on one side of the course, Phil Mickelson on the other and Vijay Singh bringing up the rear of the premier round for the World Championship, some of the top players in the game took the opportunity Wednesday to lobby for a shorter PGA Tour season.

Eleven of the world's top 12 players have gathered at the Doral Golf Resort for this week's event, something Woods said would be more common if the 125-man not a few months off in schedule.

"It would be more exciting for the fans, and I'm sure the sponsors and TV and everybody if we did play more often together," Woods said. "The only way you could do that is if we short-ened the season."

It's not that simple, although a tentative PGA Tour schedule again is under review.

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem is studying five models of when to play, where to play, even how much to play in the United States, all of it geared toward negotiations at the end of a year for a new television contract.

"You have to take a look at a number of parts of the schedule, to see if we can make it more compelling," Finchem said in an interview last week. "Length of schedule is one, where different constituents are placed in another, and where we play tournaments is one third."

Finchem did not offer specifics, and it could be that nothing changes.

But Woods and Masters champion Phil Mickelson have been the strongest proponents of shortening a schedule that begins in January and doesn't end until the first week of November.

"We have an 11-month season, and that's too long," Woods said. "There's no other sport that plays 11 months of the year. I think we should end in September."

Mickelson considered the schedule of top players over the past 40 years.

Jack Nicklaus rarely played more than 20 events. Tom Watson never played more than 24 during his prime. Woods has never played more than 21, going into his 10th full season. Mickelson played a career-high 26 two events in 2001, but he's never needed as he plays limit through the four majors, then effectively shut it down.

Woods, Mickelson, Singh and Ernie Els played in the same tournament only eight times last year, four of those majors.

"Most of the top players throughout history have averaged 16 to 18 events a year, and we average from 24 plus events," Mickelson said. "If

Yankee boss eyes better year

FL, Florida—New York Yankees manager George Steinbrenner has declared a hands-off approach to get more baseball's stunning loss to the Red Sox in the American League playoffs last October.

Steinbrenner said Wednesday, a day before the Yankees' opening summer camp for the Pittsburgh Pirates. "It worry travel. I have to fans. It's a bad loan, and I hope my team the same way this year. I'll just we get out there and get the

Steinbrenner credited general manager Brian Cashman and team president Randy Levine for acquiring Randy Johnson from Arizona and signing Carl Pavano and Jaret Wright to five-year deals.

"I saw me didn't do what we should have done last year to pitch," Steinbrenner said. "But we'll do it this year. I've always liked Randy Johnson. I always wanted him over here."

The Yankees haven't won the World Series since 2000.

"It's a matter of time for the team, an exciting time for everybody connected with it," Steinbrenner said. "I'm looking forward to seeing all the guys play again. I'm looking forward to getting back on track and going after what we know we should have done last year."

Jeter is entering his 10th season as New York's manager. Steinbrenner said he never thought anyone would last that long on the Yankees bench.

Meanwhile, in New York, Jose Vidro donned the white jersey with "Nationals" at mid-field and addressed the throw with some trepidation. After all, he spent the first eight years of his career wearing an Expos uniform.

After three years in limbo as the Montreal Expos, Vidro and the Washington Nationals played their first game Wednesday to great fanfare, beating the New York Mets and their new manager Willie Randolph 5-3 at Viera, Florida.

"It did feel good once I put it on," Vidro said. "But after I went out there, the people were cheering for us once the game started."

Vidro lined up in the stadium's game-normal shower, drew 13 hours before the first pitch, three was a half-mile traffic jam—after the game had started—and every seat was sold out.

"I was special because of the circumstances," Nationals manager Frank Robinson said.

AP

LIFE is both a ball and a beach for Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher (right), who can alleviate relax by playing a game of beach volleyball with Nicole (ab) a national women's beach volleyball team with still a few days left before the season opening Melbourne Grand Prix.

Indian draws raves from racing's best

MELBOURNE, Australia—Seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher has watched Narain Karthikeyan in testing and thinks the 26-year-old Indian driver will handle the rigors of Formula One.

Australia's Mark Webber, who knows what it's like to have the attention of a nation on his every move, said Karthikeyan would make the most of his opportunity on his debut in this weekend's Australian Grand Prix.

Karthikeyan, happily accepts the endorsements of nine years—what little a little more concerned about is how his fans drive in F1 will be raised going by length and breadth of India.

"Unfortunately I received a lot of fan letters from, I'm the first Indian in Formula One, so there'll be a lot of eyes watching," Karthikeyan told a news conference on Thursday. "In India, they're very happy for us, there's a lot of support back home."

AP

BUSINESS

John Ridolfi Pineda
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Nicholas

APLI Self-Adhesive Labels

Investors regain interest in RP securities

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL investors have regained their appetite for Philippine securities, which was dampened by the sovereign credit rating downgrades by Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Service.

Net foreign portfolio inflows to the country for $253.4 million in the first three weeks of February, a 10-fold increase from $22.9 million in the same period last year, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

This brought the net foreign portfolio investments from January to Feb. 16 this year to $797.2 million, representing a sharp increase from the meager $63.6 million registered in the same period last year.

For the month of January alone, "hot money" inflows reached $643.9 million despite the one-notch sovereign credit rating downgrade announced by S&P on Jan. 17. A month after, Moody's also slashed the Philippines' sovereign credit ratings by two notches, warning of heightened vulnerabilities to economic, financial and political shocks due to its ballooning public debts.

The downgrades jolted the markets in mid-February, but fund managers at Bank of the Philippine Islands and foreign investors had invested their interest in the local portfolio anyway then.

Heidi Yeoh, an international roadshow BPI Capital Corp. president from Hong Kong and the strong market response to Manila Water Co.'s initial public offering, which attracted $960 million in demand from international investors, were an indication that the Philippines was really "back on the radar screen" of investors.

"People are looking at the Philippines with a new eye. They are now willing to give the government a chance to deliver," she said in the sidelines of the launching of BPI's ALPM Dollar Bond Fund, a mutual fund mostly invested in Philippine global bonds.

Bernardo Sison, vice president of BPI Asset Management, added that any additional supply of government debt paper was unlikely to strike a long-term dent in the prices of Philippine bonds.

The Philippine government said it was planning to borrow a total of $4 billion from foreign commercial sources for 2001, and has so far raised $1.15 billion. S&P, however, recently said the Philippine government might have to raise as much as $7 billion (P362 billion) from commercial borrowings this year, partly to support cash-strapped state corporations.

Philippine assets have shown strong performance after Congress approved recently the tax measures that were seen crucial in addressing the country's budget shortfall.

Abay said that even the "discerning" foreign investors were bullish on Philippine debt-trading papers.

She said BPI Capital was now making a pitch for some consumer companies to list on the PSE.

Aside from Manila Water, SM Investments Inc. of retail magnate Henry Sy is now conducting international roadshows in the US.

Other big companies keen on holding IPOs this year are Mount Philippine and Globe Telecom Inc.

Bear, Stearns bullish on RP

By Michelle V. Rarus

US-BASED investment bank Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. said 2001 would be a better year for the Philippine economy, compared to the previous year, as the government's revenue-raising measures were expected to result in the improvement in the country's fiscal position.

Bear, Stearns, in a paper on the Philippine economy, said the government might achieve a "home run" in combining its fiscal problems with the implementation of its fiscal reform measures, especially those seeking an increase in the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 10 to 12 percent and the expansion of the VAT coverage.

The investment bank said it recognized that the VAT proposals were facing tough sailing in Congress amid strong lobbying by entire subsectors that the measures were unfair. But Bear, Stearns said Congress was still likely to pass new revenue-driven measures in the bills, a

PSE CHAIRMAN Jesus Arroyo joins top executives of the Stock Exchange of Thailand, led by SET chair Vijit Supinit, and Single Port Inc., a leading hard disk parts producer, in a toast that marked the listing of the company under SET's Technology Industry Group. Arroyo visited SET for scholars' observation tour.

LRTA sees P1.8B in earnings

THE Light Rail Transit Authority earlier this week said it was expecting the revenues from rail operations to increase by 70 percent this year to P2.4 billion from P1.38 billion in 2000.

But even if the LRTA would increase its projected revenue by almost P1.02 billion this year, the railway agency would still be short of funds to settle about P1.4 billion in maturing debts in 2001, according to its administrator Mel Robles.

It is for this reason that the LRTA wants to implement a P10-fare hike in the coming months.

"Even if we increase our revenue, we still fall short in the

negative because we are counting interest charges for our loans. We are servicing loans contracted for the construction of Lines 1 and 2," said Finance Manager, LRM Jessica Sison. She said the average debt service requirement of between P3.2 billion and P3.4 billion this year would include maturing principal obligations.

Last year's revenue of P1.86 billion was 32 percent higher than the P1.35 billion in 2000. Robles said the increase in sales followed the start of operations of Line 2.

However, revenues last year was lower than the P2.19 billion that the agency had projected for 2000. —Charlene D. Marmo

Insurance sector too heavily taxed, says study

By Michelle V. Rosca

TOO HIGH. Taxes imposed on the insurance industry were to blame for the Philippines' lack of interest in attracting their buyers, said Edwin Hosaka, senior economist of the Investment Info and the Pacific [illegible].

Many Filipinos find insurance expensive, and that discourages them from getting themselves and their families insurance cover, the way other nationals do, as a result, the insurance industry in the Philippines has lagged far behind its counterparts in the Asia-Pacific region.

During the presentation of his study on the insurance industry yesterday, Hosaka said the premium-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio in the Philippines was only 1 percent, or only half of the 2-percent average in this region, and very below the 8 percent in Japan.

"We are one of the few countries that impose taxes on insurance premiums, no wonder our insurance industry is one of the most under-performing in the region," he said.

On a per-capita basis, Hosaka said, each Filipino spends only an average of $6.6 for insurance premiums. The per-capita spending for insurance is five times bigger in Thailand, 20 times bigger in Malaysia and even 400 times bigger in Japan, he said.

To move from heavily the Philippine insurance industry is taxed, Hosaka identified three steps which were were requested to be insurance business. The first is when an insurance company collects premium payments from clients. Under this stage, an insurance firm should pay a 5-percent premium tax, and a documentary stamp tax (DST) of P2.50 for every P1,000 worth of premium collected.

The second step is when the insurance company invests the premiums it collected in various investment outlets, like equities and securities markets. Insurance firms pay an average of 8 percent tax on these investment activities.

The third stage is when the insurance company reports its total expenses income, which is levied a 32-percent income tax.

Hosaka, who admitted operating his own insurance company, said the insurance industry should be relieved from some of these taxes, particularly on insurance premiums, to make it competitive.

In the United States, he said, the amount of insurance premium was even declarable from one's taxable income. Hosaka said the government could help many Filipinos develop the habit of securing their future by reducing some of those taxes and, thereby, make insurance more affordable.

"If we want people to save, why are we taxing premiums? It's as if we are discouraging people from getting an insurance," he said.

For its part, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said the insurance industry was being taxed just like the other industries. A BIR official explained that the 5-percent premium tax was equivalent to the 12-percent value-added tax imposed on other businesses.

At the meantime, Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the government had already raised the tax burden of insurance companies when the BIR came up with a new system of computing the DST on insurance.

Under the new system, the BIR only collects DST when an insurance company collects premium payment from a client. Before, insurance companies were required to pay DST based on the entire amount of the insurance policy sold.

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ACCRA gets law review

ACCRA law removed an embarrassing tax law lobbyist, but it's less than the Supreme Court.

The high tribunal's First Division last week upheld a BIR ruling that electoral contributions made by ACCRA partners were both in 1997 not subject to donor's tax.

The blue chip law firm, claiming political donations are non-stock, said that the BIR had erred in treating electoral contributions since the first Tax Code was enacted in 1939, fought the BIR all the way to the Supreme Court.

The case stemmed from the 1997 donations made by ACCRA partners Manuel Abello, Jose Concepcion, Roberto Ongpin and Arthur P. Dela to the unsuccessful candidacy of ACCRA partner Edgardo Angara.

The BIR treated the P3,612,352.86 as much of the loan on the basis of their disclosure that each of them contributed an identical amount of P903,088.21 to the Angara campaign.

But before the BIR could collect the donors' taxes, ACCRA successfully resisting the case before the Court of Tax Appeals before losing, when the government appealed to the Court of Appeals.

"The fact that petitioners will contribute in the future benefit from the election of the candidates to whom they contributed in no way amounts to a valuable consideration so as to exercise political contributions from the purview of a donation," said Justice Adolfo Azcuna.

Azcuna also noted that political contributions reported to the Commission on Elections because law amongst only after the enactment of Republic Act No. 7166 in 1991.

Liquidation

THE ACCOUNTING firm Punong

Cocktales

Victor C. Ajeworlu

Torres said its audit scheduled to conduct due diligence on Export and Industry Bank on behalf of the Ayala Group of Companies and Banco de Oro.

According to the grapevine, Japan is pulling out of the Philippines and is also putting its stockbroker arm's office forward in Hong Kong on the back to concentrate on the China market.

The decision to sell the Export Bank came about after the Alatas of Indonesia, who control the Lippo Group, failed to recapitalize the Lippo Bank from the Dutch government, using the Philippine bank as bail vehicle.

The smart money is now on Banco de Oro picking up the remaining 40 percent stake of the Lippo Group in Export Bank, especially with BDO's takeover bid of Equitable PCI Bank now in judicial limbo.

Merry-go-round

• GSIS' super duper lawyer Joseph Jr. Yin has won a crucial Supreme Court ruling in his fight to prevent the retroactive sale of the law previously Cayetano Laya, the trades Rufino, and her siblings George, Constancio, Johnny and Bernardo, from claiming additional inheritance outside of the 1964 court approved portion of the Laya estate.

• THE GOVERNMENT has once bounced Senate confirmation to quietly build up its stake in the publicly listed Equitable PCI Bank. It closed on new acquisitions to 12.15 percent from about 11.47 percent in mid-2003.

• ROCKWELL is set to break ground in the fourth quarter for another condominium project, this time targeting the mid-market and young professionals.

Head through the grapevine

THE PROPOSED appointment of outgoing Energy Secretary Vicente Perez as chair of the Philippine National Oil Corp. seen as the climax of Jobi's unconvincing heart operation.

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Metrobank eyes rights offering

Bank takes advantage of strong interest in RP debt paper

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROBANK Bank & Trust Co., the country's biggest bank, plans to raise about P22 to P32 billion when it begins offering up to 350 million in new shares to existing equity holders.

Taking advantage of strong foreign investment interest in Philippine debt and equity papers, the bank yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange that its board of directors had approved the issuance of new shares out of its unsubscribed but unissued capital stock.

It said the offer price would be computed based on a 0 to 10 percent discount to either the closing price on the trading day preceding the pricing date or the weighted average price of the shares in the last 10 trading days preceding the pricing date.

The pricing date has yet to be fixed.

Metrobank said the record date once it has obtained listing and satisfied other regulatory requirements.

An analyst said that based on the P57 closing price of Metrobank shares at the PSE yesterday and the projected discount range, the stock rights offering could raise anywhere between P22 to P32 billion.

"This will lead to the further appreciation of the peso because it will result to dollar inflows," said Joseph Bonoy, Eagle Equities Inc. president. "Metrobank has a lot of foreign

METROBANK's George Ty

stockholders."

Some said raising capital was always good for any bank, as additional funds would mean expansion of business volume.

Metrobank has an authorized capital of 2.5 billion shares, of which 1.167 billion are issued and outstanding.

With the additional issuance, the bank said the number of unissued shares would go down to 116.34 million.

Other analysts said the additional tier 1 capital to Metrobank would improve its underlying capital adequacy to be adjusted of if bad asset ratio down in the past.

Metrobank is controlled by tycoon George Ty who also has interests in real estate, car manufacturing and retailing, investment banking, power generation and insurance.

BPI launches new dollar bond fund

THE AYALA-OWNED Bank of the Philippine Islands yesterday offered to the public a US-dollar unit unit fund invested mainly in Philippine sovereign bonds.

The ALFM Dollar Bond Fund, packaged unit or a dollar mutual fund distributed by BPI, when it acquired Far East Bank and Trust Co. years ago, would be sold to retail investors through the bank's subsidiaries BPI Capital Corp., BPI Securities Corp. and BPI Investment Management Inc.

During the launching, Fernando Jose Jose, president of BPI Investment Management Inc., said the ALFM Dollar Bond Fund had been placed mainly in Republic of the Philippines (ROP) bonds, of which 57 percent had long-term maturities.

Another 29 percent of the portfolio was invested in medium-term ROPs, 14 percent in short-term ROPs, and the remaining 9 percent to short-term money market instruments.

Asked why investors would want to shift to US dollar assets, since when the currency was depreciating against the peso, Bonoy said the newly launched fund was meant for investors with natural hedging capabilities.

"We have a sizeable community of investors who have dollars to begin with," Jason explained. "So, we are targeting those (who) really people and not those who will still have to convert from peso to dollars."

Explaining why the fund was heavily tilted toward ROPs, Jason said, "It's because, with the ROPs, everything is within the control of the fund manager ... The infrastructure is available as we live in this country."

He also said that Philippine bond prices "offer better yields compared to similarly rated sovereign issues."

ALFM Dollar Bond Fund chairman Romeo Bernardo said the fund was heavily invested in Philippine RBS because of ample supply.

Next to Japan, the Philippines is the biggest sovereign issuer of foreign bonds in Asia.

Global rating agency Standard & Poor's expects the Philippine government to raise another $7 billion (P383 billion) from commercial markets to finance its borrowings this year, partly to support cash-strapped state corporations.

Due to its inception, the ALFM Dollar Bond has recorded a 4.30 percent return in investment per annum, better than the 3.65 percent return on one-year US Treasuries, Jason said.

For 2004 alone, he noted that the mutual fund finished with a 2.81 percent BHD per annum, better than the 2.19 percent rate of one-year US Treasuries. From year to date, the yield is estimated at 2.68 percent, better than the 2.78 percent of US Treasuries.

With the public offering, BPI hopes to grab a bigger share of the dollar mutual fund market in the country.

As its present fund size of $46.82 million, it accounts for 13 percent of the market as against market leader Philippine American Insurance Group whose dollar bond fund corners 82 percent.

The fund believes, investments in the ALFM Dollar may prove to be a prudent strategy with the forecast exchange rate average of between P55.P56 to the dollar this year.

For a minimum initial investment of $5,000, an investor can avail of professional fund management service from BPI, while subsequent investments may be done for a minimum of $600. — DORIS C. DUMLAO

$10M marked for RP cotton trade

By Christine A. Caglican

THE PESOS/E sector is expected to pour in some $10 million, or new investments to revive the local cotton industry under the Department of Agriculture's six-year development program for the industry.

"The investments would mainly cover the rehabilitation of existing ginneries, their refurbishment and modernization," said Isidro Abao, president and general manager of Philippine Fiber Development Authority (Philfida).

Abao told reporters during the anniversary of the Cotton Development Administration (Cotda) that the private sector would take the lead in implementing Cotda's ten-year Philippine Cotton Industry Road Map.

The program's objectives include developing a privately managed cotton sector and to set aside at least 50,000 hectares for cotton production by 2010.

Cotda is spearheading the revival of the cotton industry that went on a decline during the 1990-1992 harvest season, at that time, cotton fields were reduced to 600 to about 2,000 hectares. The fall to the cleaner of a number of cotton ginneries. There were about 17 ginneries left idle.

Currently, only 4,921 hectares of farmlands are planted to cotton. Cotda is hoping to revive the cotton industry in 20 provinces.

The Philippines imports 95 percent of its cotton requirement from the United States, Australia and Pakistan.

Cotda Administrator Eugenio Ocon noted that the cotton industry had started to bounce back.

"We've been told shortage of cotton in the EPZ (Export processing zone) is 3,200, while six new ventures were approved for commercialization since 1998," Ocon said. "At the same time, we are putting in place measures to entice the private sector to go into cotton planting and production."

DISCLOSURES

A. BRIONES Ins. Inc. bought 1,000 of its own shares at P1 each.

RECORD date for **Shemel Manufacturing Corp.**'s April 26 annual stockholders' meeting is March 23.

• • •

URBAN Banking Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 5, 4 p.m. at the Penthouse of U. Bank Plaza, Makati City. Stockholders on record as of April 8 will be entitled to vote during the meeting.

• • •

PHINMA Corp. approved additional option grants of 1.35 billion shares to its officers and employees. The shares will be offered at a 20 percent discount over the average closing price of the company's stock over the past 30 trading days.

• • •

PHILIPPINE Savings Bank declared a P0.20 per share cash dividend to stockholders of record as of March 30 and will be payable thereon April 1.

Compiled by Marlon D. Tolosa PJB Research

Farmers, physicians for peace

By Emmeline M Ordoñez

I ADMIRED the way my father helped the poor. Being a medical doctor, he would cure them for free.

I too wanted to help the poor, but had no medical knowledge.

"Don't worry, you can also help the poor by giving them jobs," my father said. "This way, they can buy medicine and take preventive action against illness."

So I took graduate degrees from this university and from Stark Uni-

versity, and ultimately got a PhD in Business Administration.

But my father jokingly warned me: "Do not call yourself a doctor. I have an MD, which means doctor of medicine; you have a PhD, which means phony doctor."

Farmers and health

Since then, I have joined others in trying to increase the income of farmers and give them jobs. But I have never realized that my own story hasn't the farmer's good health.

When a farmer is sick or physically handicapped, he or she cannot work well. Often, the person needs the attention of still another Filipino to earn lost jobs.

While looking for new livelihood opportunities, we should also take care of the farmers' health.

Today, most farmers have no health insurance. When their health suffers, they give the extent of selling almost everything they own, including their land.

What the farmers have left to missing they have to rely on their health Unit (RHU) centers, which often have limited medicines and technical staff. In addition, the social services, which the farmers need to avail of the scarce RHU services, is sorely lacking.

The alternative is to adopt the approach of building sensitive marine communities, where the community itself will formulate their own health agenda and work on the social services to implement it.

Such an activity is going on in San Miguel, Bulacan.

Two days ago, approximately 400 blind people from San Miguel's 45 barangay communities came to register for assistance. This could not have happened without the social network that was recently formed.

The registration is part of the event that marks the launching of San Miguel's five-year community based health program. The launch is scheduled on March 7.

A model to follow

How this all came to be is even more interesting than the program itself, and suggests a model for others to follow.

The Sustaining Initiatives for San Miguel, Bulacan (SISB), composed mainly of women farmers, formulated their own health agenda with tuberculosis (TB) and blindness as their priority concerns.

The Philippines has the highest incidence of TB cases in the Western Pacific. The country is in the top 20, out of 170 countries surveyed. The Philippines also has the highest incidence of blindness in the Western Pacific. The country ranks 6th in the world.

Although San Miguel has the facilities to treat cases of TB and blindness, both Mayor Edmundo Buenaventura and the municipal health officer, Dr. Edwin Tesoro, believe that they are not being efficiently used because of inadequate social outreach.

Thus, when SISB mobilized the other non-government organizations (NGOs) and, together, they came out with a five-year health program that emphasized community involvement, Mayor Buenaventura decided to implement the program right away.

The massive turnout of 400 blind people two days ago could never have happened without this partnership.

Physicians for peace

The partnership that evolved in San Miguel greatly benefited from the support and innovative ideas of the Physicians for Peace Philippines (PFP), an international PAO founded by Dr. Ray Montero and led by its president, Dr. Teodoro Herbosa.

The PFP believes that it has a new paradigm in the San Miguel partnership.

PFP Philippines is part of a global PFP network operating in 40 countries. In the Philippines, the PFP has decided to try a 20-

frontal approach.

Instead of just offering free medical services, the PFP worked with the SISB, the San Miguel municipal government and another NGO called Saloch in formulating a five-year community based health program.

What is different about it is that, when the PFP offers free medical services, a massive mobilization takes place involving the whole community. The quality of the mobilization is significant because it is done in the context of a five-year program.

Dr. Edwin U. Tesoro Sr. Health Officer, Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, president of the Physicians for Peace Philippines, and Mayor Edmundo Buenaventura of San Miguel, Bulacan, at the launching of the five-year community based health

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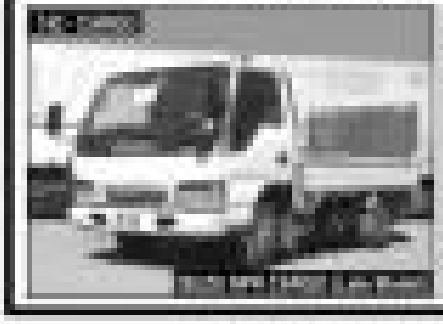

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BUSINESS

UMPC, Belgian firm ink deal

By Norman V. Donaldo

PEGGING the $117-million rehabilitation and extension of the Coastal Road may yet be removed after DREAMAX Philippines Corp. entered into a joint venture agreement with a Korean investment partner.

Jennifer Ross, general manager of DREAMAX Philippines Corp., said in a telephone interview that DREAMAX, the lead proponent of the Coastal Road project, finalized last Feb. 14 a partnership deal with Belgium's Jan De Nul, a global expert in dredging and land reclamation works.

Ross said the Belgian firm had been engaged in reclamation works for the Dredgeable Manapla Avenue and did some of the civil works for the Philippine Reclamation Authority's Bonifacio Global District Authority) reclamation project.

"Part of the deal is that Jan De Nul would private $15.3 million in equity which is one of the requirements provided in our RFP—$15-million from with the joint venture of Finance Corp.," she said.

BIC, a unit of the World Bank, had rejected the bids offered last Nov. 11 on grounds that DMDC failed to tap a strategic partner within one year as required under the loan agreement.

"The BIC has expressed its renewed interest in revalidating the bids with the entry of Jan De Nul," Ross said.

The project covers the rehabilitation of the 11-kilometer R-1 Expressway, popularly known as the Coastal Road, stretching from Barangay Tambo to Baclaran, Cavite, and its link up with the CX Road in Tagaytay via the Aguinaldo Highway bypassing the South Luzon Expressway.

Phase 2 covers the 11.2-km extension of the Coastal Road from Baclaran to Navotas in Cavite, which would provide direct links to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the Port of Manila.

However, BIC consultant Leonardo Opiel Bingat clarified in a separate interview that the tender was not terminated. UMPC-DMDC is application.

"We would be requesting [only minor] all the requirements have been complied," Bingat said. "But there is no certainty that we would terminate."

When asked what the requirements were, he declined to answer saying the new between BIC and DMDC.

Ross, meanwhile, said UMPC had decided to do the reclamation phase first considering delays in securing right of way issues on the R-1 and CX.

She said the company had also revised the design of a viaduct that is part of the Coastal Road project.

"We have shortened the viaduct from 4.25 kilometers running from Barangay Elsie to Zapote to just about one kilometer. We expect the change to lessen the project cost," she said.

Ross explained cancellation that would not the Coastal Road project—also known as the Manila-Cavite Expressway—would spook prospective other "BIC consultants to assess the new project studies with in the shortest time possible."

LIFESTYLE

SUGAR BABY cream

THE BODY Shop Musk Shimmer Puffin Raspberry (P508)

Makeup for the girly girl

THERE are three celebrities I am fascinated with, and if a makeup line makes an impact on me it's because I imagine these women using them personally. These are **Angelina Jolie** (mysterious sensuality), whose I imagined having By Terry's mercury-inspired compacts in her dresser; **Kylie Minogue** (very boudoir-sexy) and **Heather Graham** (innocent but sexy Virgo girl), who is an animal character come to life like Candy Candy all grown up.

Kinsay Sudas

Now come two makeup lines which will appeal to those who celebrate romance and femininity with no apologies, like fluffy-eyed girls.

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THE BODY Shop Crystal Lip Balms (P450)

THE BODY Shop Eye and Face Pearls in Pamela (#1 and Mentrak #2 (P1,195 each)

Makeup for the girly girl

Sugar Baby

In this Australian brand, nothing costs above P900 except for Go Glamour Go On Shimmer Puff at P1,050 and the huge '50s beauty case at P1,250, aside from the tool boxtype clear all-small like candy.

This will appeal to those of you who love Paris Hilton, who has lots of Sugar Baby goodies and professes to like dress and beauty-both Style Bibliqua—very bodied, textured, obnoxious, blatantly flirtatious and coming with sex appeal.

There babies have to fruity pink raincoats or silver screen goddesses who swear Sinful for real fluffy touches boas.

For the lips, my favorites are On Kiss n' Tell Sprinkles at P695; they are so sheer that you can avoid most of the shades. Particular faves are Shopping, Smooch and Mush on the Cheek. The Lip Candy glitter gloss is also priced at P695 and comes in Hearth and Super Star, Pin of Glass in Shower Louie Swipe and Germinator (magenta rose). Holy Gloss lip gloss comes in cutesy like paper purse.

For the skin, I like Cheek a Boo Créme Blush (P995). Flash is their bestseller for that glow from within best applied on bare skin; it is suitable for dry skin types. Blush Eye and Lip Trio (P695) in Pink Tab, and Green Créme Face and Body Luminizer (P995) in Moonshine, give an iridescent pink/lavender shimmer love for enhancing the décolletage, shoulders and cheek bones.

For those who want to be bronze? Sunshine glossie cream is the bestseller and Glow Baby Glow Bronzing Créme (P945) is Sunless Babe with matching Superstar shimmer bronzer (P695) are recommended.

For the eyes, highly recommended is the Ice Princess eye line and shine pencil (P695)...a godsend for those in a rush or have difficulty with eye makeup. You swipe, rub with fingers, tapos ready!

Natural from Princess Promise beige) and Every Princess (blush pink) are universal. Wink n' Blink eye shimmer (P695) is a loose powder eye shadow with strong pigments. Blue Blink makes great accent to outliner on upper lids and Opal Blink looks wonderful when applied on top of blush. I love all six Wink n' Blinks and get all six shades if I could, but that's me indulgence.

So, girls, I recommend Pink Pink and Think Pink on toes (fuchsia shades) and In The Pink and Pink Panther (sheers) on fingernails. Price is P495.

Spring fine

The Body Shop's spring line for 2005 is themed "Get Playful."

My personal muses for the line are chandelier Graham and Liv Tyler. There is something very fairy-tale princess, innocent and ethereal magical to the line's packaging and colors. They are packaged almost like enchanted jewelry. There are only three special products that have been launched and all are very versatile.

The Eye and Face Pearls Palette #1 (in six creamy pastels) and #2 (in six creamy lavender) are at P1,195 each. In #1, I use the Pale Green and Pearl Blue for the area under the eye so as to look awake, refreshed. It also neutralizes dark under-eye shadows. The Mink, Pink and Pale Gold are the most neutral.

Palette #2 is the hands-down bestseller as it is the safest bet for mid-tone and makeup virgins. Each palette has an ideal blush color, highlighter and, of course, eye shadow shades.

Of course, my favorite is #1 as Flower top light skin and it's what I imagine Heather and Liv would choose.

The Blush Shimmer Puff in Raspberry (P1,695) in loose powder form that just looks so pretty on the cheeks in a watermelon, saffet, and shimmer gone when I first checked.

Filipinas love love blush, they tend to be just lip or eye people. The blush shows on any skin tone as it is very pigment rich and Chicosbar can be used all year round, too, so I consider it a good investment. Of course, it follows that lighter skinned girls need less and darker ones need more.

Lastly, there is the Crystal Lip Balm (P450) with four very sensible lip gloss shades that may be used alone or above the lip color for a patent leather shine without being sticky.

There are nothing the fashion bosoms' girls that are 13 and below can use them as they are too illegal in school. Bestsellers are #4 Iced Berry, #2 Iced Cocoa, #1 Iced Pink and #4 Iced Coffee.

Angel Ruby is available at Sanrio Bazaar's.

E-mail the author at lorenzola@yahoo.com

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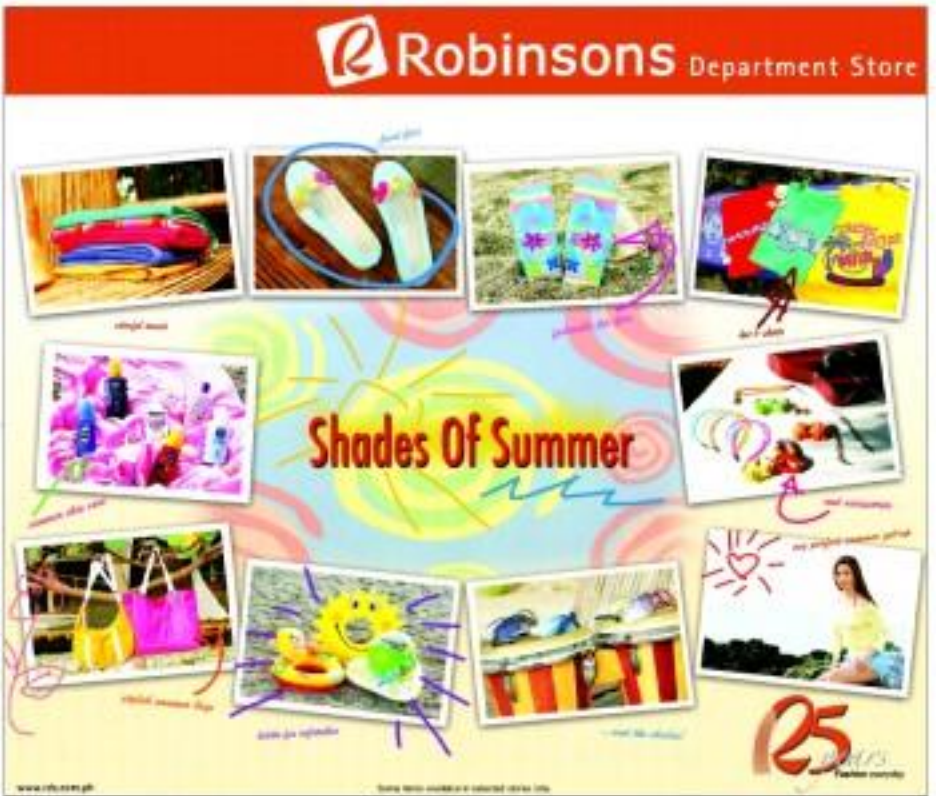


www.robinsons.ph

Robinsons Galleria Flagship Store

Robinsons Malls | Waltermart Malls | Tutuban Center | Starmall Shaw | Metropolis Star Alabang | Festival Mall Alabang | Nepo Mall Pampanga

HOTSHOT guest of honor Che-gwen Acuzarra de Real-Ledesma, Myrna Paz, Richel Guevara, mistress of ceremonies Theresa Sarmiento, executive VP of Cinderella Marketing Corp., and Janet Lirian Cunanan, advertising head, Cinderella Dream, Inc.

MARKETING and Communications director of Cinderella Marketing Corp., Maine Carvajal de Veyra (with program Chi Virgino)

INVITEES include Jill Paredes of Baby Magazine and Assistant Allen Paredes of Equestrians Realty

DANCE Guinigundo with Benjie and CEO of Cinderella Marketing Corp. Arthur Carvajal

BUSINESSMAN Nicky Santiago with wife, beauty queen, supermodel and super mom, Dara Jane Pano, and their kids Max and Sarina, who also modeled during the kiddies fashion show

Kids' day out and rocking in Rockwell

FUTURE models of tomorrow on the dress' stuff.

SITTING IT OUT. Businessman Ernie Gonzaga and George Sarmiento

THE BRILLIANT brains and culinary expert behind the popularity of Mr. Sandro, Sandrenaire Mike Sandro Rivera and Louie Cruz

WE LOVE Bananacup Jean Salcedo and pal Jean Abbas

CARISMA and Butch Serfati can't say enough of Mr. Sandro.

BROTHER and sister act. Good-looking Aying and Archief Tiongco

TV PERSONALITY Jeremy Marquez and movie actor Vandolf Quizon

STEPHANIE and Sandro Barbers with Carlo Garcia

THE FULFILLMENT of a dream is one of life's great rewards, pala ngapon.

The popular Cinderella chain of fashion retail stores hatch a grand launch of its kid's line at its Rockwell store.

Cinderella actually started half a century ago when it began manufacturing clothes for children. It blossomed into what it is today into lingerie, kids, teens, ladies and men of all types and sizes.

"This is truly a dream come true for me," said Cinderella's Theresa Gomez-Sarmiento.

"Cinderella wouldn't be where it is today without the children, and being the kids at our prime market is really out of the pillars of our success."

Now located at the 3/F of Cinderella is a haven for children of all age groups. There, they can find everything they need, from clothes to accessories and shoes. The store re-creates was declared open through an explosive balloon-popping ceremony participated in by the stunningly gorgeous actress, Antonio De Bossi exclusives, and Richwell owner, brilliant lady of adventure Monna Sun, but Cinderella-ers-in-chief were also there.

Leading the pack of fainted lassies were Celebrity Pinya birthday's head honcho, Al Santos, 2005's 7's Sales Boutiques and child models Nina and Vonn Pecoraro, Sambelan, Sophia Andres, Mike Xercito, Bianca de Veronica, Gabriel and Kimberly.

We were treated to cut out offerings from Breakfasters Nestlé Dairy for Grains and Juice Drinks, plus various pizzas and drinks from California Pizza Kitchen, amich.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Mayarice Arcache

Photos by Alice Van Hagens using Kodak EasyShare

IT'S HOT the Greek island of Mykonos but the great Bananacup Benjy Garcia advertises it to Greeks in September.

QUEEN for a day. The gorgeous Che Tiongco-Coalton community white

ENJOYING a day out in the sun, Leonard Chico with Gilles Pere, Eden and Dinday Singson

"I'M SATISFIED with the food" is the look on Jean Chua's face.

Hip-Mukad place

Now on its third year, Sambungan has proven to be a hot and hip place in Makati. Party animals have been flocking to The Jersey Place Hall and up to see and be seen with some of our town's young hipsters, paleongas.

This super smashing event by the ABS-CBN Event group, headed by Tracy Bautista-Lim and Anna del Guercio, made a 'mad' to the golden years with a new founder and true-blooming booze until the first light of the day. For good luck, gold coins were given to everyone.

The crowd was as eclectic as the music provided by Hans Miranda, Dennis Edje and DJ Bits, who was back from Singapore, darlings, and who spun a mix of everyone funk, disco, cool and cool underneath.

The party vibe was on high as a great sum of musicians, expats and artists shared like the sun would never shine again. Needless to say, paleongas, we put from way back, brilliant cuts of all sources, Leo Buttgbok, was bouncing with pride while taking shots of the colorful banquet settings" he proudly.

Right on Leo, I'm with you all the way.

Runway blast

Bundle, stunt-ers and cool chose pals armed in clever phones or cameras directed a gorgeous parade to celebrate the birthday of stunningly gorgeous local tycoon, Che Tiongco.

It was stunning partying and a culinary experience for her 200 or so cronies on the island. Everyone agreed that the best food in the event was the fresh seafood lunch served at the new restaurant Mr. Sandro Bistro. Definitely a new culinary trip for everyone.

The gang of Che, that included vivaciously adorable Aunt Abbie, attractive Jean Salcedo and her beautiful daughter, Nicole, and happily engaged Becky Garcia, all super conscious of their size-sensitives, fearlessly did lines and dug head-on to the scrumptious and sensuous crabbed pepper crab, superbly prepared by tall and good-looking Sandro Rivera, no less, paleongas.

All agreed that the centerpiece was the love they had tasted, even eateries than Mendiz's.

Everyone also emphasized, that Mr. Sandro had the dessert bathroom in Boris, an important factor for women, as once for that matter whitewashing and dining on the island.

Another plus for Mr. Sandro, which Aunt Abbie mentioned to, is that "there was no one hour of waiting for the food to be served which is a very common ordeal in other restaurants."

But Gov. Joe and Vicky Ochoa, Al and Carla Tengco, Pepper Sorbanbun and Manny del Rosario, among by our dish, Fred Paragrueyos.

Since our dish on mind to push, I didn't taste the dish, but I could see in the faces of the diners how they loved the dish. Apart all Chow remember the lunch lunch agreed to walk the direction from one end to the other. The waiters were non-stunning.

The loft and debonair Teresa, George Sarmiento, loves to dance and sained in. Everyone found all the grilled dishes delicious. He said they remember him of his favorite home-cooked Greek food.

That evening, our beautiful queen for the day Che, celebrated her birthday with a blowout fantastic display while the rest outside Manong, beamed proudly over the whole happy happening paleongas.

ERIKA Nix and Prince Vee Medford

TRACY Fuentevera and Rolando Guzman

LAYERING with different fabrics

OFF-SHOULDER dress

TIGHT and cropped

Sari-Sari's take on Oscar's fashion seems meant more for Christina Aguilera than Nicole Kidman

PHOTOS FROM AGILA

MATTE and shine

And the Oscar goes to ... anti-glamour

By Nina Y. Vergara

THE OSCARS and fashion have become inseparable ever since the red-carpet event leading up to the awards show became as big as, if not bigger than, the main event itself.

ABS-CBN and Solar Entertainment, the media outfits responsible for bringing the Oscars to Filipino viewers annually, drew inspiration from their exclusive show by hosting their version of a "red carpet" affair at the Manulane Oriental Hotel.

The poolside party complete with a giant video screen showing memorable Oscar moments and with a handful of local celebrities such as Lorna Tolentino, Richard Gutierrez and Ogie Alcasid doing the red carpet, culminated in a fashion show by Sari-Sari Store.

The clothes by Rhoel Ocampo and his in-house designers, however, were anything but Oscar fashion. But a few pieces, such as the cropped pants paired either with a sheer poncho or cuffed blouse, had a glamorous feel to them. Indeed, it could only be Rhoda Rabaya, Hello Berto or Divine Theresa to come up in boho top, draped denim mini and fishnet stockings worn over knee-high socks on the big night. But even at the Governor's Ball or the Vanity Fair party.

But will John Roberts, Renée Zellweger and Hilary Swank wore up to the idea of dipping into silk-shoulder blouses and cuffed dress, let guests in the crowd to close behind the red-carpet cops.

Sue Stranger, president of Sari-Sari Store, thinks differently.

"When you go to a formal event," she says, "you don't have to wear a typical gown. We want you to come out wearing something that reflects the real you. Apart from wearing your individuality, wearing something younger is one way to set trends."

The bulk of their target market, says Stranger, consists of young professionals aged 18 to 28. This explains the label's emphasis on versatile and relatively affordable club wear that can easily be worn dressed and given a new look with the right styling.

The retail chain, which features clothes designed by Rhoel Ocampo, Rhu Lopez, April Gabaldon, Hugh Dominguez and Rusy Pineda (who does the men's line), has been at the forefront of edgy yet accessible fashion for nearly two decades now.

HOLLYWOOD style

Layering was quite evident in several clothes that followed, including volume around the shirt area, thanks to cuffed poncho-made of layers upon layers of tulle. Mini shorts/pants and skirts. Oversized inspired tuxedo jackets were worn over midriff tunics and/or worn only with full skirts.

The styling may be far from mainstream, but the gowns characters were quite wearable. In fact, just a few of Sari-Sari's pieces were close to the body and celebrated the female form. That's definitely one silhouette Jennifer Lopez would have loved.

E-mail the author at nvergara@inquirer.com.ph

Fashion breaks the mold at Paris ready-to-wear

VIVIENNE Westwood

YOHJI Yamamoto

PARIS—Fashion is both breaking away and looking back to the past in Paris ready-to-wear, with John Galliano leading the way for Dior last year.

He showed simple navy blue Black-and-white shift dresses, aviator jackets teamed over the shoulders of striped jumpers, black wool peacoats with glazed rose brocaded rose prints and curvy little hip-length jackets in reptile-patterned leather worn with bubble skirts or tuck dresses with empire waist and hits or strips underbellies.

Models wore over-sized shoulder jackets with cargo pockets on the sleeves to carry cell phones or cigarettes. There were also gold lamé jackets with zipped waists worn with gamer-length aviator pants.

Many of the jackets had either slightly padded sleeves or broad shoulder that marked styles much as decades ago. The big-dress memory lane did not end there. Longsleeve bateau-neck tops layered over sparaglo camis. There were also cocktail velvet jackets and copper tulle jeans.

Inspired by rock stars, French fashion's bad boy once cut lots of gold sequin tutorials pants that peaked from under wool officer's coats.

Glitzy

But Galliano is also a master tailor. Aside from impeccably cut, square-shouldered jackets that fell to the knee in deep points or buttressed off to one side, he used Orange Tweed effects to create a trench coat with a knee pleated skirt—accenting it with pointed leggings.

This season's Dior's chaos, which united blending, bare shoulders, extreme and opposite-sex styles under-where seem to be jackets. French work for winter and, conversely, dark colors can carry one through the hottest summer days.

Designers are remembering the 1980s' broad shoulders, tuxedos detailed, leggings and sweepsuit pants. They're borrowed tart, acid colors from the 1970s, tiered little dresses from the swinging sixties, and cloth and chunky from chunky icons of the 1950s and 1960s.

The house of Issey Miyake usually offers new technologies in fashion. But this season Hiroki Tsukuno seems to have been swept up in the sense of frilly romantic looks.

Aside from touch and effects—such as sewn with sheer, mixed soft pants. Tsukuno surrounded to ruffles and flounces on soft jersey dresses with ruffles cuffs, drapes and gathers, and skirts that fell from hip yokes into handkerchief points. AP

MARITHÉ & François Girbaud

JEAN-PAUL Gaultier

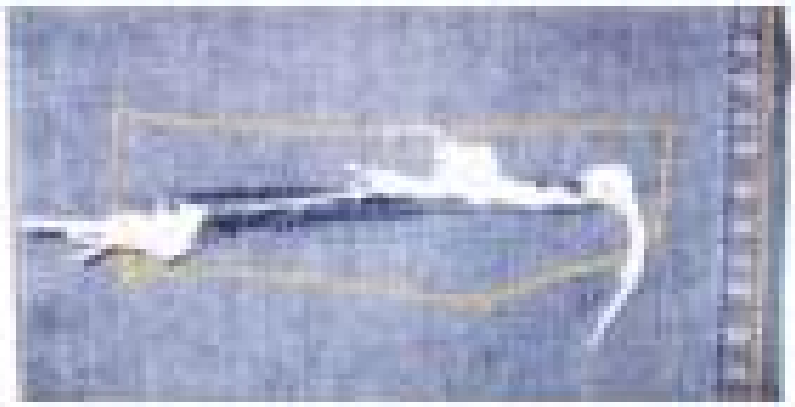
JOHN Galliano for Christian Dior

COOL shift to summer /C7

LIFESTYLE

Reworking your basic blue jeans

More than adornments, deconstruction is key in creating a stylized, unique pair



Jeans 1

Lovell started this particular pair of old jeans for Lipstick by stripping the fabric completely off the back pockets, leaving only the stitched outline. She then added a contrasting color fabric to the pockets and finished off the look with fine lines of thread and a chain, creating a unique look for the pair.

To achieve this look, Lovell decided to retain the jeans' original color. He then removed both back pockets, leaving only the stitched outline. He then added a contrasting color fabric to the pockets and finished off the look with fine lines of thread and a chain, creating a unique look for the pair.

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Jeans 2

Lovell decided to start this set-part of Liberal jeans by breaking up conventional boundaries that make for standard fashion. Using thrifted and reconstructed jeans as the base material, Lovell then added contrasting fabrics and textures.

He cut off the waistband completely, then he took the belt loops and reattached them (the front and back) to the jeans and several other pieces and joined the pieces at random. To finish, he knotted and studded random areas to create texture.

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Alonzo-Sandoval

NOWADAYS, individual style is encouraged and lauded more than ever. Expressing yourself through your manner of dressing and choice of clothing is exciting and, to put it simply, quite fun.

One way to do this (and stand out in a crowd) is by stitching your basic blue jeans.

Remember the "Dial up your Levi's" promo back in the early '90s? It was a nationwide competition where participants had to customize their denim jeans as creatively as possible.

Tools you need

- A sewing machine
- An embroidery or darning needle
- Denim thread
- Fabric softener
- Masking tape
- Thread
- Sewing machine
- Thread (different or of fabric from chosen)

LEVI'S Square Cut jeans style statement puts attitude at the forefront—relaxed and free style that is definitely no nonsense.

HIGHLIGHTING a cutting-edge and sporty statement that springs from his inherent spirit of individuality

EXUDING playful confidence and down-to-earth chic in the spring/summer collection

Hip to be square

LEVI'S new Square Cut jeans for guys and girls is sure to redefine the boxy impression to that four-cornered form.

For guys, Levi's Square Cut jeans is not only more stylish but guarantees a very comfortable fit as well.

The same wider waist band and thicker belt loops are applied. The lightweight broken twill denim, cup-attacking and low hip cut give a more casual yet distinctive statement.

Modifications in pocket design are apparent, with a wider assortment of darker finishes in two fits, slim and regular.

Three fits are customized for various body types: skinny, straight and tight boot cut. All are applied in stretch and non-stretch fabrics, varying hues and finishes provide for a body flattering cut that fashions mind fusion.

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Levi's spunky new collection puts attitude at the forefront, from the casually relaxed Levi's XCHP line and glamorous Levi's Lady Style range, jackets, tops and skirts.

The blend of pearly feminine details with avant-garde designs are oozing yet refreshing, while the utilitarian basis in the men's jeans are combined with innovative construction for a rebellious look.

Levi's SOME Lady Style and Square Cut jeans will be in stores this month.

LEVI'S goes hip and happening!

Reworking your basic blue jeans

From page B1

Participants were wild with their designs. Beads, sequins, embroidery and whatnot were used without compunction, thereby creating unique, personalized looks.

Although embellished denims are still in, designs are subtler and more streamlined. (It pays your personality, of course, to have days in fact, more than adornments, deconstruction is key in creating a stylish pair of jeans.

But it's not easy to find something distinctive in the local stores and boutiques, or a bit of creativity still helps. Fortunately, I chanced upon Stephanie Sicko's tattooed stylist Leopol Ramos, who was then wearing a pair of deconstructed, slashed, vintage-looking denim.

Always in search of fashionable pieces, I asked him where he got his up-to-the-minute denims and it turned out it was no old vanity pant he had remodeled.

I took the opportunity to ask him to share with us how he goes about designing/deconstructing his jeans and what he does to achieve a certain look or finish.

Here are some pieces which he remodeled for himself and some clients and friends, and how he made them.

Want to have your old pants re-styled? Call Leopol at (09)8 9458698.

E-mail the author at spaulrivera@yahoo.com

Jeans 3

Vanity fare vocal artist Cecile Dominguez wanted a unique pair of jeans, so she asked Leopol to rework her old 199 pair. Leopol started by bleaching the jeans with one part of water mixed with five scoops of Clorox bleach. He soaked the pants until he achieved the desired color.

Then he used a toothbrush to diffuse the bleach, and laundered the denims with fabric softener. "If you want to create a certain pattern or design, you can also use clothing tape to cover up certain areas you do not want to bleach," says Leopol.

Having achieved the desired finish, Leopol removed both back pockets and the small, secret pocket in front. Then he cut off the leg and sewed it on the back, just below the waistband. He also added dark patches in the bare area and the back with the use of old dark denim material.

Jeans 4

Leopol redyed this pair of all-purpose-bought jeans for himself. Again, he bleached the fabric to desired areas. Next was the pair with fabric softener. He created a wide wash on the knees using a blade. He also cut off the bottom and distressed the hems by pulling off the threads, and brushed specific spots with a blade in other areas.

Jeans 5

The unfinished look of this pair of jeans was easy to achieve. Leopol simply used a blade to brush the soles and made random cuts for an artistic effect. Vintage feel.

SHOUT Hot Summer postmen bag, cap and pouch. Also available in yellow, apple green and red

COLORS brought to life in the Benetton Carnival Collection

Segue cooly into summer

SLING your arms into the Sling Collection of cotton canvas bags in black or apple green.

By Shirley Oh
Contributor

NOTHING heralds the arrival of summer better than the sudden profusion of hot tropical colors. Lime green, aqua blue, canary yellow and salsa red are back in their rightful places —front and center—for the season, and heaven help those who try to resist their call.

The latest collection of Segue bags is a sweet siren for some summer fun, especially with bags named Carnival, Fling and, well, Hot Summer.

Executed in lines of linen leather hobo bags in basic black and white, brings us back our carefree childhood days with its brightly colored pastches, reminiscent of dropped ice cream scoops and bright confetti littering the streets after a day of fiesta.

Those who dream of joining us in Segue for a little getaway but can only afford Puerta Galera can take comfort in the Twenty and Fling collection, whose low scope and durable material—cotton and canvas mull, respectively—can get you to the beach in style.

If preppy is your luggage style of choice but you still want to be a bit more daring and fun than casual, Chelsea and Subway are for you.

The Chelsea collection of backpacks and totes are sure to stand the test of sand and seawater with its polyester barrel material, and they can also stand the test of style in shades green, sky blue and sand. Subway is a luggage line for the boater-jeweler set, complete with 20" and 25" wheeled bags and even a 17" wheeled beauty case. And these bags will be definitely hard to lose and hard to miss in the airport, with their distinctive green, red and yellow colors.

ENERGETIC colors of Benetton Twisty Collection raise the vibes of a sunny summer day. Available in backpacks, shoulder and sling bags in various sizes and cosmetic pouches.

SEQUE La Fayette flip flops with bottles spell summer fun. Also available in pink and lavender

ADD flair to your outfits with these Benetton and Segue wedding belts.

THE ABSOLUTE Benetton hot soup pieces of luggage feature the season's boldest colors.

SIDLEY Blake nylon bags enhanced by power colors—black and orange or fuchsia and orange

FOR that hot summer night out, Segue offers glittery butterflies to mirror the cling stars.

CASUAL multi-pocketed braided Molly in blue or apple green

Finally for those who like to be over the top, the Hot Summer line of canvas/mull bags is a good choice. In red, apple green, yellow and turquoise, you're sure to generate heat and stare-by-obvious with these bags in their colorful floral designs and Hot Summer statements.

Fling, Subway and Hot Summer are available at Segue Shoe-bita 2 and Segue Megamall A, Carriles, Twenty and Chelsea are available at ATC Cole and Segue stores.

KEEP the sun out of your eyes in style with these Benetton caps, visors and umbrellas.